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THE CONCEPT OF "WORLD" IN THE HASIDIC WRITINGS OF MARTIN BUBER

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OF BOOKS BY MARTIN BUBER

ABH	*A Believing Humanism*
AF	*Autobiographical Fragments*
BMM	*Between Man and Man*
D	*Daniel: Dialogues of Realization*
EG	*Eclipse of God*
FSH	*For the Sake of Heaven*
GE	*Good and Evil*
HMM	*Hasidism and Modern Man*
IT	*I and Thou*
IW	*Israel and the World*
KG	*Kingship of God*
KM	*The Knowledge of Man*
LBS	*The Legend of the Baal-Shem*
M	*Moses*
OJ	*On Judaism*
OMH	*The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*
PF	*The Prophetic Faith*
PU	*Paths in Utopia*
PW	*Pointing the Way*
TH 1	*Tales of Hasidism: Earlier Masters*
TH 2	*Tales of Hasidism: Later Masters*
TR	*Ten Rungs*
TRM	*Tales of Rabbi Nachman*
TTF	*Two Types of Faith*
WM	*The Way of Man According to the Teachings of Hasidism*

PART I

Perspective

PART I

Perspective

Martin Buber's "world" vision of the eighteenth century Hasid is admittedly highly interpreted. Necessarily so, he would insist, for his goal is not to lay at our feet the bones and facts of the past, but to bear into our lives the flesh and life of the Hasid. Only a fully involved person can bear life and communicate it to another.

Such scholarship can never be understood in the abstract; it must be communicated in the context of its history and the personalities involved. The reader requires the perspective of the person with whom he is speaking: who is this man? what are the critical experiences that have shaped his personality and values? He requires the perspective of Hasidism: what is its history? how has it learned to evaluate life? He requires the perspective of Buber's total scholarship: does his Hasidic vision relate to his more popular philosophy of the I and Thou? will an understanding of the one assist in understanding of the other?

He requires the perspective of the interpretation itself: what are the conflicting interpretations? What is Buber's response? How does he define his scholarship? his method? his goals?

Part I provides the reader with the essential background for an understanding of Buber's Hasidic "world" vision.

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION

In Search for a Concept of "World"

> For God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved.[1]
>
> You must not love this passing world or anything that is in the world. The love of the Father cannot be in any men who love the world.[2]
>
> We know that we belong to God, but the whole world lies in the power of the Evil One.[3]
>
> There will be no more death, and no more mourning, or sadness. The world of the past has gone. Then the One, sitting on the throne spoke: "Now I am making the whole of creation new."[4]
>
> The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his Son. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but Creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God.[5]

"World" has various meanings: the cosmos; the earth with its inhabitants; the human race in all its social life; man's ways and interests.[6] "World" sometimes depicts those hostile to God and sometimes those who are his disciples; sometimes those dominated by Satan and sometimes those redeemed by Christ.

---

[1] John, 3:17. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are made from The Jerusalem Bible, New York, 1966.

[2] I John, 2:15.

[3] I John, 5:19.

[4] Revelation, 21:4-5.

[5] Romans, 8:18-21.

This ambivalence becomes an occupational hazard of every theologian. How will he estimate and interpret "world"? How will he relate its conflicting elements? How will he avoid selecting one element to the mental exclusion of all others, canonizing or condemning over-simplification? Objectively, "world" is a one-reality, and yet a dialectic of conflicting elements. Subjectively, he would like to conceive it in a manner that penetrates its inner meaning, and yet remain faithful to its objective manifestations. This particular concept is always present--ambivalent and bothersome.

This ambivalence continually asserts itself throughout scripture. On occasion, "world" stands in opposition to God: the spirit of the world versus the spirit of God. "The base of this opposition is found in the sinfulness of the world, the sin that entered through one man."[7] Yet in another context, "world" is viewed in a perspective of "having been created by God and of the divine plan which it is to ultimately realize."[8]

---

[6] The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, New York, 1966, 1645.

[7] J. McKenzie, S.J., "World," Dictionary of the Bible, Milwaukee, 1965, 943.

[8] L. Bouyer, "World," Dictionary of Theology, Tournai, 1965, 468-9.

This same ambivalence disturbs the entire history of theology, even to our present day. Contemporary theologians[9] portray this disturbance as a continuing struggle between the Hellenic and the Hebraic mentalities. To the Hebrew, "world" is a linear time sequence in motion toward some ultimate fulfillment, a concept related in the Greek Aeon or Latin Saeculum. The Hebrew knows no dichotomy, real or conceptual, between body and soul, matter and spirit. Man and world are embraced as a unit and expressed in terms that accent this or that quality within the whole. "World" is one; it is good. Not yet fully realized or redeemed, it moves down through the ages gradually unfolding itself.

In contrast, the Hellenist sees "world" as a static repetitive place, reflected in the Greek Cosmos, or the Latin Mundus. World is a duality: the real and the appearances; spirit and matter; eternal and temporal; soul and body. The perfect, ideal world is above us. We must tolerate this imperfect and passing deception until that which is real unfolds itself to us. The fate of this world is annihilation; to be redeemed means to escape to the better world above.

Even Vatican II's Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (that very constitution which was to speak of the world to the world) reflects this same unresolved confusion. In its second paragraph, we read:

---

[9] H. Cox, Secular City, New York, 1966, 1-32. J. Robinson, Honest to God, Philadelphia, 1963, 11-28, 45-63. L. Dewart, The Future of Belief, New York, 1966.

> The council focuses its attention on the world of men, the whole human family along with the sum of those realities in the midst of which it lives; that world which is the theater of man's history, and the heir of his energies, his tragedies and his triumphs; that world which the Christian sees created and sustained by his Maker's love, fallen indeed into the bondage of sin yet emancipated now by Christ, who was crucified and rose again to break the strangle-hold of personified evil, so that the world might be fashioned anew according to God's design and reach its fulfillment.[10]

And yet, in the thirty-seventh paragraph, the conflicting vision asserts itself:

> That is why Christ's Church, . . . cannot resist echoing the Apostles' warning: "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2). Here, by the world is meant that spirit of envy and malice which transforms into an instrument of sin those human energies intended for the service of God and man.[11]

Karl Rahner's and Herbert Vorgrimler's Theological Dictionary speaks directly and boldly to the problem:

> The world "to be" is already here and at work in the world that is still "present." Thus Christianity knows only a dualism of saving history which is already in process of resolution, no radical, irreconcilable dualism between God and the world; and Christian practice should not be tacitly guided by any such perverse idea.[12]

Yet if we accept this bold statement, can we avoid classifying a majority of recent magisterial statements as dualities and therefore "perverse." Moreover, these authoritarian directives to Christian practice are seldom "tacit" in their dualism.

---

[10] Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, Second Vatican Council, tr. NCWC, Washington, 1966, para. 2.

[11] Ibid., para. 37.

[12] K. Rahner and H. Vorgrimler, "World," Theological Dictionary, New York, 1965, 491.

The importance of our "world" concept can hardly be exaggerated. The theologian cannot begin to formulate a theology of creation, revelation or redemption except in terms of a previously selected metaphor of "world." Whether consciously defined or unconsciously ignored, the concept is present and overwhelmingly formative.

Nor can the man on the street take even a first step in his search for the sacred except in terms of some "world" concept. Born in the world and thoroughly formed by it, he must first know how to evaluate it before he can perceive beyond it and hope to meet God.

This pivotal importance of "world" forces our attention. For while the theologians preferred to speak in the well-established Hellenistic metaphor, science gradually destroyed man's understanding of that dualistic thought pattern. As a result, the theologian found his reflections valid but irrelevant to the man on the street and even to himself.[13]

Rudely shaken, he now postulates a Hebraic concept of "world" in place of the discarded Hellenic concept. Whether or not this postulate will be accepted by modern man is yet to be seen; this is not the primary concern of this thesis. The "state of the question" is limited to the pivotal importance and ambiguity of a "world" concept to theology. What do we mean when we say "world"?

---

[13] J. Mathews, "The Peace of Christ in the Modern City," Worship in the City of Man, Washington, The Liturgical Conference, 1966, 39-49.

Martin Buber

With this question in view, this thesis turns to one of the great and influential wisemen of our time. Martin Buber, a contemporary writer (1878-1965), not only provides some insight into this term, but actually influences its shape within our generation. A friendly commentator describes his role in this way:

> Buber's style was elliptical, poetic, suggestive, a far cry from the tidy systems of geometric theologians. Yet he managed to get into our bones. It would be hard to imagine what either contemporary Catholic or Protestant theology would be like had Buber never introduced them to the world of "meeting" and "encounter," and the "I-Thou" relationship between man and man, and man and God. We are all in his debt, that man who told us first about "dialogue," who spoke of an "eclipse of God" in response to Nietzsche's cry that "God is Dead!"--and who exhorted us to find in the person standing over against us that "Thou" to which we could respond with all our being.[14]

Even his sharpest critics evaluate his influence highly:

> One gets so tired of the I-Thou relationship in recent thinking (popularly best known in Honest to God) and its effect on Christian theology and practice threatens, if its proponents are right, to be so devastating, that it seems worthwhile to have a look at the main source of the river which has overflowed so much cultivated ground. And the origin is not in Kierkegaard nor in Bonhoeffer nor in Tillich; the real "villain of the piece" or "font of inspiration" (call it whatever you will) is Martin Buber. . . .[15]

Buber's most receptive audience is the Christian theological world. Reinhold Niebuhr described him in life as "perhaps the greatest living Jewish philosopher"[16] and in eulogy as: "one of the most creative spirits of our age."[17] On the occasion of Buber's eightieth birthday, Niebuhr's brother, H. Richard, said:

---

[14] "Martin Buber," Commonweal, 82 (Jul 2 '62), 461.

[15] C. Armstrong, "Thou," Church Quarterly Review, 116 (1965), 494.

[16] A. Cohen, Martin Buber, 21.

> More than any other person in the modern world, more even than Kierkegaard, Martin Buber has been for me, and for many of my companions, the prophet of the soul and the witness to that truth which is required of the soul not as solitary but as companionable being.[18]

Karl Barth, Nicholas Berdyaev, Emil Brunner, Martin D'Arcy, Paul Tillich, Romano Guardini, and Friedrich Gogarten have all expressed their indebtedness to him.[19]

Buber's own Jewish world does not embrace him quite so enthusiastically. His failure to give the Law first preference in life offends the Orthodox; his Hasidic interpretation irritates the rigid Hasid; and his "cultural" Zionism and proposal for a bi-national Jewish-Arab state angers the nationalistic Zionists. Nevertheless, they all recognize Buber as "a prophet to the Gentiles,"[20] and honor him in his own right.

> Dr. Buber is the most distinguished and influential of living Jewish thinkers. . . . We are all his pupils. The contemporary reintegration of modern western Jewish writers, thinkers, scientists with their people is unthinkable without the work and voice of Martin Buber.[21]

---

[17] R. Niebuhr, "Martin Buber: In Memoriam," Saturday Review of Literature, 48 (Jul 24 '65), 37.

[18] M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue, v.

[19] B. Murchland, "Buber's Pursuit of the Holy," Commonweal, 78 (Aug 8 '58), 471.

[20] A. Cohen, loc. cit.

[21] L. Lewisohn, Rebirth: A Book of Modern Jewish Thought, New York, 1935, 87.

> No Jewish thinker has had a greater cultural, intellectual, and religious influence than has Buber in the last four decades.[22]

Since Buber's thought represents so broad and penetrating an influence, this thesis turns to his work in search of an understanding of the concept of "world."

Statement of the Question

Martin Buber developed and verbalized his thought in dialogue rather than by system. Paraphrasing his description of the two kinds of teachers, Buber taught as a helper, seeking to aid each man to find his own truth, rather than as a leader who presents his doctrine with authority.[23]

One dialogical situation in which Buber developed his deepest insights into life was an eighteenth-century Jewish mystical movement called Hasidism. Through this dialogue, Buber not only proclaimed Hasidism to the world, but came to understand his own fundamental religious convictions. While Buber engaged in many dialogues during his life,[24] this thesis is limited to the Hasidic, which is possibly his most fundamental dialogue.

---

[22] M. Friedman, loc. cit.

[23] M. Buber, "Replies to My Critics," The Philosophy of Martin Buber, LaSalle, Ill., 1967, 738.

[24] See R. Oliver, The Wanderer and the Way, Ithaca, 1968. It would not be true to maintain that his insights were developed here exclusively, any more than to say that this was Buber's only dialogue. Buber's thoughts unfold organically, in response to and formulating themselves in the terminology of each dialogical situation in which he found himself. Oliver shows a cross comparison of some of Buber's pivotal thoughts in their biblical, Hasidic and philosophical forms. See especially Chap. 2, p. 5.

The question then is: What is the concept of "world" which Buber presents to us in his dialogue with Hasidism--the concept basically proclaimed to us through his Hasidic writings?

Method of Procedure

This thesis is divided into two sections. The first, chapters two through five, equips the reader with the background necessary for a clear and comfortable reading of Buber's Hasidism. Chapters six through ten carry the main burden of the dissertation's exposition and analysis.

Buber identifies his work as a "dialogue" rather than an historic study. This is not simply an admission of an interpretative role. Rather, he holds "truth" to be found between scholar and subject of study; he intends to allow himself to influence as well as be influenced by the material before him. Chapter two reviews those basic experiences of Buber's life which profoundly influenced his Hasidic interpretation.

Most likely, the reader is already familiar with Buber's I and Thou and some of his philosophical writings. Yet he might find himself a stranger and ill-at-ease in his Hasidic writings. Chapter three, a parallel study of "world" in Buber's philosophical formulations, will serve as valuable orientation and mental bridge into the Hasidic formulations.

Buber's critics have charged that his Hasidic writings are selective and unreliable. The reader can better evaluate this charge if provided with an objective, historic sketch of the Hasidic Movement and a summary of its religious teachings (chapter four). A more direct assessment of this criticism and of Buber's response in chapter five not only attempts to refine the issue in the reader's mind, but also serves as an excellent description of Buber's methodology and goals. With this background, the reader is introduced into the dissertation proper.

Buber, an existential theologian, gives us less of a formal system than an organic permeation of Hasidism. His presentation does not lend itself to a series of tight, logically dependent steps of analysis. Therefore, this essay approaches its exposition of the "world" concept by way of four interrelated points of view. Each uses a different methodology and studies Hasidism on a different level of content. Each attempts to clarify and expand the concept established in the parallel studies.

Chapter six abstracts from the totality of Hasidic content the fundamental principles that shape all of its teachings. Under analysis, each principle discloses a basis common to all: world-affirmation.

Chapter seven traces the redemptive process logically from evil, through man's creative response, to unity. Each stage is analyzed as a distinct concept, then related to the overall process.

World becomes concrete and demonstrable in community. Chapter eight analyzes the individual elements of community and their interdynamics through the eyes of Buber.

In Hasidism, Buber presents not an interesting study, but a saving message to our contemporary world-in-crisis. The ninth chapter analyzes Buber's diagnosis of our present situation and gives a detailed exposition and analysis of Hasidism's response and prognosis.

The final chapter recapitulates the essential elements of the "world" concept in direct response to the thesis question.[25]

---

[25] This dissertation prefers the rough but sensitive transliteration of Maurice Friedman, even though smooth, less jarring English words could have been found (e.g., decisionlessness rather than a state of indecision). Such roughhewn, exact literalness preserves Buber's gaunt simplicity. Except in direct quotations, the same word was continued throughout the thesis. Cf. S. and B. Rome (eds.), Philosophical Interrogations, New York, 1965, 5.

CHAPTER II

LIFE OF MARTIN BUBER

Life-Experience

Several excellent studies of the life of Martin Buber are currently available to the reader,[1] and more are promised.[2] Rather than factually outline his life, this chapter will single out some of those "life-experiences" he himself recalled, in an attempt to see their influence on his "world" concept.

Malcolm Diamond describes Buber as an "existentialist" and describes this philosophical attitude in reference to its founder, Soren Kierkegaard:

> A central dictum of his approach was that even the highest degree of rational consistency in a philosophical system cannot coerce existence into conformity with its conclusions. Existence, as encountered by a man of flesh and bone, is not an interplay of rational consistencies, but a panorama of possibilities encountered in a world of fact. The central task for the individual is to achieve authentic selfhood by means of resolute decisions. This summons to free and responsible decision is the stuff of existence and the focus of existentialism.[3]

---

[1] A. Cohen, Martin Buber, London, 1957. M. Diamond, Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist, New York, 1960. M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue, New York, 1955. H. Kohn, Martin Buber, sein Werk und seine Zeit, Köln, 1961. G. Schaeder, Martin Buber, Hebräischer Humanismus, Göttingen, 1966. R. Smith, Martin Buber, Richmond, 1967.

[2] M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Encounter on the Narrow Ridge, New York, scheduled for 1968. Cf. ABH, 22.

[3] M. Diamond, op. cit., 16.

Life is not subject to the mold of logical conclusions; rather these conclusions are subject to life experience. In Israel and the World, Buber subscribes to this view quite emphatically:

> According to the logical conception of truth, only one of two contraries can be true, but in the reality of life as one lives it, they are inseparable. The person who makes a decision knows that his deciding is no self-delusion; the person who has acted knows that he was and is in the hand of God. The unity of the contraries is the mystery at the innermost core of the dialogue.[4]

He presents to us, then, no system in the sense of a work, complete and not pointing beyond itself:[5] but rather, thought, bound up with concrete situations, "moulded by them and in turn moulding them and illustrating them," forming an interlocking whole.[6]

The very heart of Buber's concept of life is "meeting" and "dialogue." The key understanding of his intellectual endeavors is to see them as situations of dialogue rather than as objective studies. Buber never speaks to or of; he speaks with. As he says, "Lived life is tested and fulfilled in the streams of life alone."[7]

Buber intends to remain within the stream and to give his philosophical impressions from within. Some may object that philosophy is primarily an act of abstraction, an observation that is critical and from without; they will find it difficult to accept Buber's approach. For Buber, however, there is only the "from within."

---

[4] IW, 4. For a fuller explanation, see M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue, 4.

[5] M. Buber, Werke, 1.7; see also HMM, 42, and FSH, XIII.

[6] R. Smith, Martin Buber, 9.

[7] BMM, 12.

> Here you do not attain to knowledge by remaining on the shore and watching the foaming waves; you must make the venture and cast yourself in. . . . In this way and in no other, do you reach anthropological insight.[8]

Roy Oliver thought he had perceived the source of Buber's I and Thou concept in the Kabbalistic Zohar and made this suggestion to him. Buber replied: "The term 'I and Thou' in my book is the result not of reading but of personal experience only." Oliver observed:

> It should be added that it looks--it is not quite certain--as though Buber had put the full stop after "experience" and then, setting aside all he had derived from reading, added the emphasis "only."[9]

If this is true of the totality of Buber's work, it is emphatically true in relation to his Hasidic studies. As was pointed out, Hasidism is the situation in which Buber not only uncovers the germ truth of this eighteenth-century community itself, but also lays open to us the germ truth of all mankind--the germ philosophy of Martin Buber.[10]

Yet it would not be correct to consider his Hasidic studies as the only approach or even the best approach into the thought of Martin Buber. There are three approaches, in fact: the biblical, the Hasidic, and the philosophical. And the germ thought so interpenetrates all three that it can be apprehended in any one of them or in all three.

---

[8] BMM, 124.

[9] R. Oliver, The Wanderer and the Way, xi.

[10] L. Chestov, "Martin Buber: un mystique juif de lanque allemande," Revue philosophique de la France et etranger, 116 (1933), 432.

> In one way, therefore, it matters little whether an account of Buber's work begins with the "I and Thou" philosophy--which is more likely to attract contemporary intellectuals than an approach through an unfamiliar eighteenth century Jewish folk movement in Eastern Europe that almost seems to move counter to the tides of modern history--or with what might be received as merely one more piece of Biblical exegesis--or with Hasidism, which will appeal to aesthetics because of the beautiful legendary "literature" that Buber has restored and its intriguing pictures of a colorful religious life in small communities; even Allen Ginsberg and Norman Mailer respond to this.[11]

This dissertation seeks Buber's "world" through the door of Hasidism.

Formative Childhood Experiences

Mordecai Martin Buber was born in Vienna, Austria, on the 8th of February, 1878. At the age of three, his parents were divorced and he was sent to live with his paternal grandparents in Lemberg (now Lvov) in the crownlands of Galicia.

It is while living with his grandparents that he recalls perhaps the most influential event of his life.

> The child itself Martin expected to see his mother again soon; but no question passed his lips. Then there took place at one time what I have to tell here.
>
> The house in which my grandparents lived had a great rectangular inner courtyard surrounded by a wooden balcony extending to the roof on which one could walk around the

---

[11] R. Oliver, op. cit., 2.

> building at each floor. Here I stood once in my fourth year with a girl several years older, the daughter of a neighbor, to whose care my grandmother had entrusted me. We both leaned on the railing. I cannot remember that I spoke of my mother to my older comrade. But I hear still how the big girl said to me: "No, she will never come back." I know that I remained silent, but also that I cherished no doubt of the truth of the spoken words.
>
> It remained fixed in me; from year to year it cleaved ever more to my heart, but after more than ten years I had begun to perceive it as something that concerned not only me, but all men. Later I once made up the word "Vergegnung"--"mismeeting," or "miscounter"--to designate the failure of a real meeting between men.
>
> When after another twenty years I again saw my mother, who had come from a distance to visit me, my wife, and my children, I could not gaze into her still astonishingly beautiful eyes without hearing from somewhere the word "Vergegnung" as a word spoken to me. I suspect that all that I have learned about genuine meeting in the course of my life had its first origin in that hour on the balcony.[12]

Out of this painful, negative experience of "miscounter" Buber became most sensitive to all "encounters" or meetings in life. It is to become the key thought in his philosophy, and he recalls several other experiences of this same type during his earlier years. At nine, he begins to spend his summers with his father and at fourteen, moves from his grandparents' home to his father's townhouse. Of his father, he observes:

> I noticed what really concerned him when I stood with him in the midst of the splendid herd of horses and observed him as he greeted one animal after another, not merely in a friendly fashion but positively individually, or when I drove with him through the ripening fields and looked at him as he had the wagon halt, descending and bent over the ears again and again, in order, finally, to break one and carefully taste the kernels. This wholly unsentimental and wholly unromantic man was concerned about genuine human contact with nature, an active, responsible contact.[13]

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[12] *AF*, 3-4.

[13] *AF*, 7.

At eleven, Buber recalls another incident that could be labeled "spiritualistic" or "imaginary" but at least indicates the deep hunger of his soul for "meeting."

> I used, as often as I could do it unobserved, to steal into the stable and gently stroke the neck of my darling, a broad, dapplegray horse. It was not a casual delight, but a great, certainly friendly, but also deeply stirring happening. If I am to explain it now, beginning from the still very fresh memory of my hand, I must say that what I experienced in touch with the animal was the Other, the immense otherness of the Other, which, however, did not remain strange like the otherness of the ox and the ram, but rather let me draw near and touch it. When I stroked the mighty mane, sometimes marvelously smooth-combed, at other times just as astonishingly wild, and felt the life beneath my hand, it was as though the element of vitality itself bordered on my skin, something that was not I, was certainly not akin to me, palpably the other itself; and yet it let me approach, confided itself to me, placed itself elementally in the relation of Thou and Thou with me. The horse, even when I had not begun by pouring oats for him into the manger, very gently raised his massive head, ears flickering, then snorted quietly, as a conspirator gives a signal meant to be recognizable only to his fellow-conspirator; and I was approved.
>
> But once--I do not know what came over the child, at any rate it was childlike enough--it struck me about the stroking, what fun it gave me, and suddenly I became conscious of my hand. The game went on as before but something had changed, it was no longer the same thing. And the next day, after giving him a rich feed, when I stroked my friend's head, he did not raise his head. A few years later, when I thought back on the incident, I no longer supposed that the animal had noticed my defection. But at the time I considered myself judged.[14]

His early writings, at age twenty-three, not only continue this sensitivity toward meeting, but envelop it with a sense of God and world.

> God is not divided but everywhere whole, and where he reveals himself, there He is wholly present. This wonderful world feeling has become wholly our own; we have woven it

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[14] AF, 10.

> into our innermost experience. There often comes to us the desire to put our arms around a young tree and feel the same surge of life as in ourselves, or to read our own little special mystery in the eyes of a dumb animal.[15]

Buber's grandparents, Solomon and Adele, were remarkable people. His grandfather, though self-educated, rose to become a recognized scholar of the Haskalah (Enlightenment) Movement. He received several columns of recognition in the 1925 edition of the Jewish Encyclopedia for his critical editions of the Midrash--a unique mixture of interpretations of the Bible, wise sayings, and rich sage.[16] Yet he was also a prosperous banker--auditor of the Austro-Hungarian bank, the national bank, and the Galician savings bank; landowner, miller, and corn merchant. In addition, he belonged to various honorary groups, the Chamber of Commerce, and philanthropic societies.[17]

> He never neglected these honorary offices: his own business however, he left in general to his wife, who conducted it all in a splendid and circumspect manner but made no decision without consulting her spouse.[18]

Despite the scholarly reputation of his grandfather, it is his grandmother who gave Buber his deep love for learning. It was she who taught him to study, not only according to the standards of scholarship, but as one who "perceived" and was involved in a conversation. "With her, experiencing and reflecting on experience were not two stages but, . . . two sides of the same process.[19]

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[15] M. Buber, "Ueber Jakob Boehme," Wiener Rundschau, 5012 (1901), 251. Quoted in M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue, 29.

[16] I. Singer and others (eds.), The Jewish Encyclopedia, 3 (1925), 410-11.

[17] *Ibid.*, 410. See also A. Cohen, *op. cit.*, 26.

[18] AF, 4.

> My grandfather was a true philologist, a "lover of the word"; but my grandmother's love for the genuine word affected me even more strongly than his; because this love was so direct and so devoted.[20]

At age nine, Buber spent his summer months with his father and frequently traveled with him to Bukovena to celebrate the Sabbath in the small Hasidic community of Sadagora. In appearance, it had little to recommend itself; Buber recalls the village as "dirty," the people as "the dark Hasidic crowd," and the state of Hasidic practice as "corrupt." But nevertheless the hidden spiritual power shone through to him in a most impressive manner.

> The legendary greatness of the grandfather has certainly disappeared in the grandson and many are at pains to preserve their power through all kinds of petty magic, but all their carryings on cannot darken the inborn shining on their foreheads, cannot destroy the inborn sublimity of their figure: their unarbitrary nobility speaks more compellingly than all their arbitrariness.[21]

More impressive than anything else was Buber's unforgettable experience of the true leadership of the Zaddik and his binding relationship with the community.

> When I saw the Rebbe striding through the rows of the waiting, I felt "leader," and when I saw the hasidim dance with the Torah, I felt "community." At that time there rose in me a presentment of the fact that common reverence and common joy of soul are the foundations of genuine human community.[22]

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[19] AF, 5.

[20] Ibid.

[21] HMM, 51.

[22] HMM, 53.

In the Zaddik particularly, Buber sensed a realization of the true epitome of a fulfilled human being.

> I realized at that time, as a child . . . realizes such things, not as thought but as image and feeling--that the world needs the perfected man and that the perfected man is none other than the true helper.[23]

These childhood experiences left permanent folds on Buber's spirit. But inevitably, as he matured, his unquestioning openness faded and childhood loyalties dissolved. He explained that as long as he lived with his grandparents his roots were firm, although many questions and doubts jogged about inside him. "Soon after I left his house, the whirl of the world took me in.[24]

Buber's faith collapsed rather quickly. On a second visit, the Hasidic community of Czortkow is labelled simply as "superstitious" and "degenerative." He based his Bar Mitzvah dissertation on a work of Schiller rather than the scripture portion of the day.[25] Finally, shortly after his twelfth birthday, he ceased altogether to observe the Jewish ritual practices.[26]

> Until my twentieth year, and in a small measure even beyond then, my spirit was in steady and multiple movement, in an alternation of tension and release, determined by manifold influences, taking ever new shape, but without center and without growing substance: It was really the "Olam-ha-tohu," the world of confusion.[27]

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[23] HMM, 52.

[24] HMM, 56.

[25] M. Levin, "Sage Who Inspired Hammerskjold," New York Times Magazine, Dec. 3 (1961), 58.

[26] F. Rosenzweig, On Jewish Learning, N. Glatzer (ed.), New York, 1955.

[27] HMM, 56.

Educational Influences

Vienna must have been a fascinating experience for Buber, especially as a new arrival from provincial Lemberg. It was the dynamic cultural crossroads of the southern German, Jewish, and Slavic influences.[28] Franz Joseph ruled the Hapsburg Empire, at this time stretching out of Austria into Poland, Russia, and the Balkans, and including Germans, Czechs, Poles, Meggars, Croats, and Serbs.[29] Vienna itself glowed with a strange and lovable mixture of playfulness and reality. It was an artistic center, boasting of its music, poetry, and drama. The heir of ripe wisdom, it yet had something soft and feminine about it.[30]

Vienna was particularly attractive to the young Jews, especially to the many who were estranged from their religious roots.[31]

> The remarkable thing is that the fact of his being a Jew is so little in evidence during this period. There is reason to think that it did not mean much to him, either.[32]

Judaism was torn among three conflicting movements.[33] First arose a secular Enlightenment Movement called the Haskalah, whose followers, the Maskilim, wished to break away from the separatist ghetto characteristics of Judaism and identify fully with the secular cultural movements in Europe. This included a change in language, dress, education, political interests, etc. The Maskilim were repelled by the superstitious anti-intellectualism of their fellow Jews. By and large, they were typical of the Jews of Vienna.

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[28] H. Kohn, op. cit., 19.

[29] M. Beek and S. Weiland, Martin Buber, 1.

[30] Kohn, op. cit., 19. [31] Ibid., 20.

[32] M. Beek and S. Weiland, op. cit., 2.

[33] A. Cohen, op. cit., 23.

The Enlightenment set off a reaction of re-entrenchment among the Orthodox who saw such a venturing out from strict identity as a threat to the faith and morals of Judaism. Their traditions and customs gave them identity and were often their sole means of survival. Admittedly, this fear sometimes proved well-founded. The Orthodox rabbis reunited with their former enemies, the Hasidim, in common cause against this new threat.

However, the Maskilim were not overcome by the strong opposition of the Orthodox and generally succeeded in achieving secular identity. Nevertheless, the results were disillusioning. They were still identified as Jews, still the objects of anti-Semitism, pogroms and persecutions. Out of this frustration arose a third movement, Zionism--a move for national identity centered in their own land, Israel.[34]

Buber enrolled in the school of philosophy at the University of Vienna in the fall of 1896, taking courses in philosophy, history of art, history of literature, psychology, classical philology and economics.[35] As was the custom of the age, he traveled to various universities throughout Europe, auditing selected classes. Thus in the winter semesters of 1897 and '98, he studied at Leipzig while the prior summer sessions were spent at Berlin, Zürich, and Basel. His final year and doctorate was at the University of Berlin.[36]

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[34] D. Bridge (ed.), The New Jewish Encyclopedia, New York, 1962, 193.

The influences felt by Buber during his four years of formal education can be divided into influential writers, teachers, and his own doctoral work.

Buber's literary readings centered on Tolstoy, Ibsen, and especially Dostoevsky.[37] He was attracted by the manner in which they attacked the spiritual decadence of the times, proposing with unusual insight an understanding of man's inner cleavage. Especially in the latter he heard affirmed "a religion of mystical ecstasy, love, and brotherhood."[38]

Kant had already influenced Buber before coming to the university. We are told how, at the age of fifteen, Buber became entangled in the problem of space and time, faced by the contradictory juxtaposition of time and prior timelessness, space and its edge of spacelessness. The problem disturbed him so much he reports his being on the edge of suicide, and then his being rescued by a reading of Kant's Prolegomena which viewed space and time as forms placed upon reality conceptually in order to give it order and understandability.[39] If Buber had any dissatisfaction with Kant, it was only that Kant had not gone far enough. Rather than limit his thinking to the epistemological and ethical, Buber preferred to carry the thought out into the ontological--into the experienced world of reality.

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[35] H. Kohn, op. cit., 23.

[36] Ibid., 22, 23.

[37] B. Murchland, "Buber's Pursuit of the Holy," Commonweal, Aug 8 (1958), 469.

[38] M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue, 35.

Ludwig Feuerbach postulated answers to questions Buber felt were unresolved by Kant. Feuerbach placed the whole man, not cognition alone, as the beginning of his study; and not man alone, but man in relation with other men--man in community. There is, Feuerbach told Buber, a unity among men, but based "only on the reality of the difference between the I and the Thou."[40]

Yet Buber rejects Feuerbach's thought on two other points: his putting human relations in place of God, and his opposing idealism and establishing his concept as a comprehensive system.[41]

Of all the great masters, Nietzsche was probably the greatest influence on Buber's life. He admits to placing himself under the "spell" of Nietzsche at an early age,[42] and his style, especially of I and Thou, gives evidence of this spell. Hans Kohn observes that, though Nietzsche's name is seldom mentioned in the work of Buber, much of Buber's development would be unthinkable without his influence, particularly Daniel. Kohn traces this strong influence through two of Nietzsche's disciples, Georg Simmels and Bergson.[43]

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[39] BMM, 136.

[40] BMM, 136.

[41] N. Rotenstreich, "Buber's Dialogical Philosophy," Philosophy Today, 3 (1959), 168.

[42] AF, 12-13.

> Nietzsche's influence can account, in part, for the dynamism of Buber's philosophy, for its concern with creativity and greatness, for its emphasis on the concrete and actual as opposed to the ideal and abstract, for its idea of the fruitfulness of conflict, and for its emphasis on the value of life impulses and wholeness of being as opposed to detached intellectuality.[44]

As Kohn explains, it was not any one thought, nor the entire system of Nietzsche which so deeply impressed Buber; it was his greatness. Only he, along with Kierkegaard, had the new sense of religiosity, the hourly concept of the presence of God.[45] It is to Nietzsche that Diamond traces the inspiration of Buber's statement: "We do not will a revolution; we are a revolution."[46]

It has been noted that much of Nietzsche's thought came to Buber by way of Bergson. Much of Buber's "standing in the stream of life" identifies with the intuitionalism of Bergson, but Buber differs from him in seeing the Thou as subject, and bridged in relationship. Bergson's thought allows the Thou to remain an object. He is much more concerned with the act of intuition than with the other person. Buber refers to this as Bergson's atomism.[47]

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[43] H. Kohn, op. cit., 21.

[44] M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue, 34.

[45] H. Kohn, op. cit., 21.

[46] Ibid., 29. M. Diamond, op. cit., 6.

[47] N. Rotenstreich, op. cit., 169.

Two teachers exerted a marked influence on Buber Georg Simmel and Wilhelm Dilthey, both of the University of Berlin.

Simmel, teaching sociological philosophy, is quite similar to Buber in his concept of belief. As in Buber's Two Types of Faith, he speaks not of a rational belief--"belief that" (pistis)--but a definite, personal interrelation with God: a "trust in" (emunah).

> Also there is a way to believe in a man--meaning to have a relation of trust to the whole man, a relation that takes precedence over any proof concerning his particular qualities.[48]

Simmel, however, deals with the psychological and emotional part of man rather than man as a whole.

Wilhelm Dilthey, teaching philosophy of culture, supplies a key point in Buber's philosophy of realization by noting the difference in the way of knowing in the humanities--Geisteswissenschaft--and that of the natural sciences--Naturwissenschaft.

> In the former the knower cannot be merely a detached observer but must also himself participate, for it is through his participation that he discovers both the typical and the unique in the aspects of human life that he is studying.[49]

In the latter, the knower remains always an objective observer "from without."

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[48] M. Friedman, Life of Dialogue, 48.

[49] H. Hodges, Wilhelm Dilthey: An Introduction, New York, 1944, 12-16.

Buber's doctoral work was in the Christian mystics: Jakob Boehme, Meister Eckhart, and Nicholas of Cusa.[50] It is interesting to observe that Buber selected a field so apparently different from all the studies noted above. The "Christian" aspect reflects his continuing trend away from his Jewish roots, but the mystical underlines his search for spiritual roots within himself--roots found only in some kind of relation with God. The search for self in God could be the common denominator between his university studies and his doctoral interests.

Yet all paths began to lead him back to Judaism. Not only were these the genuine roots that could not be ignored, but all his "new" paths gradually took him round trip. Scholem, for example, notes that the Lutheran mystic, Jakob Boehme, developed thoughts that are amazingly similar to those of the Jewish Kabbalah, especially on the topic of evil. It is easy to postulate Boehme as a stepping stone, leading Buber to the contemporary manifestation of the Kabbalah, Hasidism.[51]

Return to Zion

While a student at Basle in 1897, Buber attended the first Zionist Congress and met the attractive leader of Zionism, Theodore Herzl, a Viennese playwright and journalist. For Buber, this encounter heralded a first call to a return to his Jewish roots.

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[50] A. Cohen, op. cit., 27.

[51] G. Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, New York, 1961, 237.

> The first impetus toward my liberation came from Zionism. I can here only intimate what it meant for me: the restoration of the connection, the renewed taking root in the community. No one needs the saving connection with a people so much as the youth who is seized by spiritual seeking, carried off into the upper atmosphere by the intellect; but among the youths of this kind and this destiny, none so much as the Jewish.[52]

He recognized that such a call must be responded to by his whole self--by a knowing and an entering into, by the risk of commitment.

> That Zionism seized me and that I was newly vowed to Judaism was, I repeat, only the first step. The acknowledgement of the nation does not by itself transform the Jewish man; he can be just as poor in soul with it as without it. But to him to whom it is not a satiating but a soaring, not an entering into the harbor but a setting out on the open sea--to him it can indeed lead to transformation. Thus it happened to me.[53]

Concluding his doctorate at Berlin, Buber returned to Vienna and began working on the staff of Die Welt, the Zionist publication. During the following year, 1902, he helped to initiate Judischer Verlag, a publishing firm that spread the Jewish national movement throughout central Europe.[54]

The Zionist movement was personified in Theodore Herzl, and much of its momentum and success was achieved through the strength of this one personality. His vision of Zion was an exciting one, an Aufschwung, i.e., a kind of outward bound adventure.[55] "If you will it, it is no legend," became the slogan that transformed Zion to reality.[56] But so idealistic a movement naturally met with opposition, not only from the outside, well established Orthodox Jews, and the equally well assimilated Haskalah, but also within its own ranks.

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[52] HMM, 57.

[53] HMM, 58.

[54] H. Kohn, op. cit., 43.

[55] M. Beek and S. Weiland, op. cit., 3.

[56] The New Jewish Encyclopedia, 203.

Herzl polarized himself more and more toward a political Zionistic position, seeking to establish an immediate Zionist state. Complications prevented the immediate availability of Palestine. As Herzl became stirred by the famous Dreyfus case in France and the reports of pogroms in Russia which caused hundreds to become refugees, he urged for an immediate substitute--even Uganda, the British "stopover" proposal.[57]

In opposition to Herzl's political Zionism, Buber, Chaim Weizmann, and others proposed a cultural Zionism. The clash of interests met at the Fifth Zionist Congress in Basle, and severely set back the political movement.[58] Weizmann and Buber combined their talents and founded a new publication, Der Jude. While it never saw publication, a manifesto expressing the principles of cultural Zionism was presented.[59]

Following the confrontation of the Congress, Herzl suffered his fatal heart attack. Der Jude was abandoned. Buber withdrew from the active, political life and retired to Poland for five years of Hasidic studies.[60]

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[57] M. Levin, op. cit., 58.

[58] M. Beek and S. Weiland, op. cit., 4.

[59] H. Kohn, op. cit., 296-301.

[60] M. Levin, op. cit., 58.

But before we move on to these important Hasidic studies, we might consider Buber's cultural Zionism or philosophy of Judaism more clearly in the present context. Much of this philosophy developed after his Hasidic studies, but its foundation was laid during this Zionist period of Buber's life.

Gustav Landauer, a friend of Buber, strongly influenced his position. Landauer developed a detailed study on the tension between the highly centralized political state--Gesellschaft--which loses sight of the individual, and the smaller associations within the state--Gemeinschaft--that strive to achieve true community.[61]

In the Zionist question, Buber opposed the erection of another stultifying Gesellschaft, preferring the establishment of a genuine community, one which respected each individual within it. Toward this end, he realized that a rediscovery of the Jewish soul must take place.

Hugo Bergmann and Leo Herrmann invited Buber to speak on this topic before the Bar Kokhba, the Jewish Student Organization of Prague. He accepted and delivered the first of eight speeches--the following spread over ten years (1909-19). In these Reden über das Judentum, he formulated his spirit of Judaism, influencing, among others, Franz Kafka and Max Brod.[62]

Judaism had all but lost meaning and content. Zionism offered hope for the future but nothing for the present. Rigid

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[61] M. Diamond, op. cit., 6.

[62] N. Glatzer, "Editor's Postscript," OJ, 237.

Orthodoxy and superstitious revival movements had been rejected, but what remained? Buber proposed a path between separatist orthodoxy and total secular assimilation, between political nationalism and religious institutionalism. He called for a rebirth of the ethnic personality: "Rootedness in one's origin, heritage and history and awareness of one's destiny, i.e., of the destination one must follow."[63]

In this concept he first uses the term "Das Zwischenmenschliche," the interhuman relationship. He felt that the Jews were destined to be a living sign of the basic interpersonal and communal relationship that exists, at the core, among all men, yet must be realized into conscious practice if "world" is to fulfill itself. Its last great demonstration was the Hasidic community, but it is the destiny, not only of this one small group, but of all Jews and the only real meaning of all peoples in the world.

> This primal Jewish reality was a primal human reality, the content of human religiousness.[64]

This very mission of Judaism to the world required that it identify and live faithfully in its roots. For this reason, Buber could never be persuaded to speak to the world in any posture other than as a Jew.

> It has often been suggested to me that I should free this teaching from its "confessional limitation" as people are fond of putting it, and proclaim it as an unfettered doctrine for humanity. But to enter such a "universal"

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[63] *Ibid.*, 239.

[64] *HMM*, 59.

> path would be for me pure wilfulness. In order to speak to the world of what I have received, I am not bound to step forth into the street; I can remain within the doorway of my ancestral home. Even the word that is uttered there does not get lost.[65]

Hasidism: Roots

The above account of Buber's dialogue with Zionism has been expressed as a unit. Actually, a five-year retirement intercepted the period of involvement and publication (1897-1904), and the period of presentation of the eight talks on Judaism (1909-19), a pivotal interlude in the life of Buber.

He speaks of two great conversions--"turnings"--in his life and divides the first into two steps. The first step was his move from the chaos of university life to Zionism. Then, he explains:

> I professed Judaism before I really knew it. So this became, after some blind groping, my second step: wanting to know it. To know . . . I mean immediate knowing, the eye-to-eye knowing of the people in its creative primal hours.[66]

In search of this knowing he returns to the study of the Hebrew language. One day, searching through the library:

> I opened a little book entitled the Zevaat Ribesh--that is the testament of Rabbi Israel Baal-Shem--and the words flashed toward me, "He takes unto himself the quality of fervor. He arises from sleep with fervor, for he is hallowed and becomes another man and is worthy to create and is become like the Holy One, blessed be He, when He created his world." It was then that, overpowered in an instant, I experienced the Hasidic soul. The primal Jewish

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[65] M. Buber, The Way of Response, N. Glatzer (ed.), 195.

[66] HMM, 58.

> opened to me, flowering to newly conscious expression in the darkness of exile: man's being created in the image of God I grasped as deed, as becoming, as task.[67]

All the images of his childhood experience with the Hasidim came back to him; the memories of the Zaddik and the community returned and he felt a genuine call to respond.

> I recognized the idea of the perfected man. At the same time I became aware of the summons to proclaim it to the world.[68]

In answer to this call, Buber retired from journalism, Zionist activities, and all social engagements, and began his search for the Hasidic soul. He first gathered "not without difficulty, the scattered, partly missing literature, and [he] immersed [himself] in it, discovering mysterious land after mysterious land."[69]

His studies convinced Buber that Hasidism, in its early phase (1750-1825), and in its legendary--as distinct from theoretical--literature, produced a surge of creative living that was unparallelled in history.[70] It was not the wisdom of an individual, but of a community; not that of a religious community of monks, separate from the ordinary course of the world, but of a community living in and with the world. This life in and with the world is the core of Hasidism.[71]

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[67] HMM, 59.

[68] Ibid.

[69] HMM, 60.

[70] M. Diamond, op. cit., 9.

[71] A. Cohen, op. cit., 99. R. Smith, op. cit., 12.

> The task of man, of every man, according to Hasidic teaching is to affirm for God's sake the world and himself, and by this very means to transform both.[72]

His procedure, then, was to collect the legends and translate them, communicating their inner spirit. His first attempt was the Tales of Rabbi Nachman, chosen because the texts were in better order and more popular than other existing legends. But he was thoroughly frustrated in his first efforts.

> When I had finished, what lay before me seemed to me paltrier than I had supposed, definitely inferior in quality to the related stories from the Thousand and One Nights. When I saw one of them printed, I was altogether disappointed.[73]

Buber realized that he must approach the legend with a free spirit if he is to offer more than the empty words.

> I noted that the purity did not allow itself to be preserved in translation, much less enhanced--I had to tell the stories that I had taken into myself from out of myself, as a true painter takes into himself the lines of the models and achieves the genuine images out of the memory formed of them.[74]

How faithful was the artist? "It is fairly certain," writes Ronald Smith, "that he transformed the tradition, with the touch of a creative spirit. But I do not think that he destroyed it."[75] Smith hints at the great amount of criticism leveled against Buber by virtue of this artistic approach. Not all critics were as kind as Smith. To such arguments, there could be only one final response, frequently spoken by Buber himself and here reflected by Emil Fackenheim:

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[72] WM, 6.

[73] HMM, 61.

[74] Ibid.

[75] R. Smith, op. cit., 12.

> If some criticize him on this account, whether on behalf of the ideal of objectivity in research or of that of originality in philosophy, one can only reply that here as elsewhere, Buber merely practices what he preaches: that all true living is meeting; that one can understand a great heritage only by meeting it within one's open self, not by leaving one's self out of the meeting. . . .[76]

A year later, employing his new theory of interpretation, he published The Legend of the Baal-Shem, a more satisfying venture: "I bore in me the blood and the spirit of those who created it, and out of my blood and spirit it had become new."[77] The third book, The Life of the Hasidim, presented the essential virtues of the Hasid: ecstasy, service, intention, and humility. At thirty-one, Buber returned to public life and journalism.

Hasidism: Fruits

Buber had spent five years sinking his roots deep into Hasidism and searching for its life. The fruits of this search were steadily borne throughout his life, but in a special, and quite remarkable, manner during the years immediately following this retreat.

In describing Buber's involvement with Zionism, it was noted that two conversions, or "turnings," occurred during his life. The second was the more pivotal, especially in terms of his attitude to "world." The surrounding years can only be understood in relation to it. The incident itself, probably the one most frequently related by Buber, is as follows. He was settled in Berlin, probably about 1917, in the suburb of Seelandorf. It was the custom for many to seek him out for advice--so much so that he became referred to as "the Zaddik of Seelandorf."

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[76] E. Fackenheim, "Some Recent Works by and on Martin Buber," Religious Education, 54 (1959), 413.

[77] HMM, 63.

> One afternoon, after a morning of "religious" enthusiasm, I had a visit from an unknown young man, without being there in spirit. I certainly did not fail to let the meeting be friendly; I did not treat him any more remissly than all his contemporaries who were in the habit of seeking me out about this time of day as an oracle that is ready to listen to reason. I conversed attentively and openly with him--only I omitted to guess the questions which he did not put.
>
> Later, not long after, I learned from one of his friends--he himself was no longer alive--the essential content of these questions; I learned that he had not come to me casually, but borne by destiny, not for a chat but for a decision. He had come to me, he had come in this hour.
>
> What do we expect when we are in despair and yet go to a man? Surely a presence by means of which we are told that, nevertheless, there is meaning.
>
> Since then I have given up the "religious" which is nothing but the exception, extraction, exaltation, ecstasy; or it has given me up. I possess nothing but the everyday out of which I am never taken.[78]

He dichotomizes the religious and the everyday, the mystical and the real, and he has passed from the one order to the other. This conversion is reflected in all his works: his Hasidic interpretation, his philosophy of Judaism, as well as his philosophical works.

In 1913, Daniel achieves realization as well as orientation, but still sees "the other" as object rather than as subject to my subject. The work envisions an immediate unity of the dichotomy--something that can be described as a "mystical" unity, eliminating distance and relationship.

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[78] BMM, 14.

In the year 1922 I and Thou, this pre-conversion or half-conversion pattern gives way to the full "dialogical." All the elements of the mystical unity have disappeared and the everyday of this world is fully embraced.[79]

With Hasidism, it can be said that Buber gradually sensed a polarity of thought within the Hasidic community. His background until now attracted him to the mystical orientation, but gradually the spirit of Hasidism drew him away from the mystical to the "hallowing of the everyday." The religious experience, recounted above, was the life-experience that convinced and completed this conversion.

Mystical and everyday should be clarified. The mystic, in ecstasy, seeks oneness with God, either by the absorption of his I into the Absolute, sacrificing selfhood, or by the drawing of the Absolute into the I in an expansion of selfhood. In either case, relation is annihilated in the consummation of union, either sacrificing "world" or transforming it into something other than itself. One way or another, this "world" goes.[80] Buber himself was a successful mystic until:

> . . . an influence from Hasidism (undoubtedly the strongest influence in his life) also served to turn Buber away from a self-denying world-renouncing mysticism. There was a

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[79] W. Herberg, "Introduction," Writings of Martin Buber, 12-13. A. Cohen, op. cit., 33.

[80] A. Cohen, op. cit., 42.

> spirit in Hasidism which taught him early, even when he sought to defend himself against the knowledge, that he was "destined to be in love with the world." The Creator is to be sought and loved in and through His creation, and in and through creatures, rather than apart from them.[81]

Looking back, he later rejected all his former mystical attitudes.

> All doctrine of absorption is based on the colossal illusion of the human spirit bent back on itself. . . .[82]

> It [mysticism] too lets man be alone before God, but not as a Single One. The relation to God which he thinks of is the absorption of the I, and the Single One ceases to exist if he cannot--even in devoting himself--say I.[83]

> But in the actuality of lived life, the man in such a moment [of mystical experience] is not above but beneath the creaturely situation, . . . he is not above but beneath dialogue.[84]

Hasidism, then, is world-affirming, according to the tradition of Judaism;[85] it is a spirituality that hallows community and everyday life rather than withdrawing from it, "for man cannot love God in truth without loving the world."[86]

> Religion which withdraws man from the stream of life falsifies the truth of life. If the end of religion is to teach man the right way to conduct himself before God, then surely the right way is one which restores man to the flow of life, rather than removing him from it.[87]

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[81] J. Trapp, "Introduction," To Hallow This Life, New York, 1958.

[82] I and Thou, 93.

[83] BMM, 43.

[84] BMM, 25.

[85] M. Diamond, op cit., 19. E. Borowitz, A Layman's Introduction to Religious Existentialism, 165.

[86] HMM, 10.

[87] A. Cohen, op. cit., 53-4.

Such then is the "hallowing of the everyday," the affirmation of this world, in this day and this place, to which Buber has been permanently converted, principally through his dialogue with Hasidism.

The ramifications of this "turning" continued to unfold as the years transpired. Particularly illustrative and important is Buber's encounter with the writings of Kierkegaard which he studied during the 1930's. Next to Nietzsche, Kierkegaard is Buber's greatest mentor, yet one he did not hesitate to disagree with.

Buber identified with Kierkegaard's teachings on many issues. Just as Nietzsche had opposed philosophical rationalism from the standpoint of human creativity, so Kierkegaard opposed it from the standpoint of faith,[88] a faith that is a relationship with God rather than an abstract assent. For him faith is a risk, a going out into the insecurity of each uniquely new situation rather than taking shelter in the universe. It speaks of the importance of realizing one's belief in one's life.[89]

But at this point, Buber has a rather violent reaction against Kierkegaard's thought, which he presented in the "Question of the Single-One."[90] It centers on the question of where the "holy" is to be placed: Is God found in the world or away, out, and separate from it? Whereas Kierkegaard called for renouncement of contact with the world and people, and directed himself solely toward God, seeking to be the Single-One, Buber sees the fundamental standpoint in one's social relationship in the world--man with man in an essential dialogue.[91]

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[88] M. Diamond, op. cit., 10.

[89] M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue, 35.

[90] BMM, 40 ff.

He sees the difference tragically illustrated in Kierkegaard's decision to terminate his engagement to Regina Olsen. Kierkegaard felt in conscience that he could not marry Regina and still be a Single-One. Buber, on the contrary, sees the marital relationship as the epitome, the incorporating sign, of the basic relationship between man and man in which the "holy" is made present.[92]

In another description, Kierkegaard polarizes the individual and the mob, concluding that the further the individual removes himself from the mob, the faceless society, the closer he becomes a Single-One and the closer he grows to God. Buber, to the contrary, sees the individual as self-deceiving, even as he recognizes the mob as truly without humanity. But if they both take God as their center, and one acknowledges God through the other, and makes his way to God through the other, then the Single-One renews his nexus with the mob and mob is transformed into community through the Single-One.[93]

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[91] B. Murchland, _op. cit_., 470.

[92] A. Cohen, _op. cit_., 39.

[93] _Ibid_., 40.

While Buber frequently speaks of marriage as the epitome of the dialogical relationship, he never speaks of his own marriage. Once asked by a reporter about his personal life, he replied that it was exactly that: personal.

We know that Paula Judith Winkler, born on June 14, 1877, was from a leading German Catholic family. She met Buber while she was a student at Munich and came with him to Vienna to join the editorial staff of *Die Welt*. She converted to Judaism when they married (the date is uncertain), and lived at his side for fifty-eight years. She herself was a writer, having published two books under the pen name of George Munk. They had two children, Rafael and Eva, and at the time of Martin's death, four grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. When Buber died in the little home on Lovers of Zion Street, Jerusalem, his walls were decorated with framed poems of his earlier years, many of them poems he had written to his wife and cherished throughout his life. One of them, written on his fiftieth birthday, speaks of the indescribable influence she had on his life and thinking:

ON THE DAY OF LOOKING BACK

The roaming one spoke to me: I am the spirit
The iridescent one spoke to me: I am the world.
He had hovered 'round me with wings.
She had encompassed me with play of flames.
Already I wanted to pander to them,
Already my heart was duped,
When there stepped before the demons
A presence.

To the roaming one it said: You are madness.
To the iridescent one it said: You are deception.
Then both spirit and world became open to me,
The lies burst, and what was, was enough.
You brought it about that I behold,--

Brought about: you only lived.
You element and woman,
Soul and nature![94]

Frankfurt-am-Main

A decisive meeting occurred in 1920 between Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, the reputable Jewish existentialist and author of Der Stern der Erlösung. Rosenzweig had heard of Buber in his earlier years and once termed his work "superficial, atheistic theology."[95] However, in the '20's they became good friends, joining forces on the monumental task of translating the Hebrew Bible into German.

> Whereas Luther's translation had sought to make the Hebrew as German as possible, they sought to make the German as Hebrew as possible.[96]

Yet hardly had this task begun when Rosenzweig was struck with a fatal paralysis.

In 1923, the University of Frankfurt-am-Main opened the Chair of Jewish Religion and Ethics. Rosenzweig, for whom it was originally intended, nominated Buber, with the added recommendation of Paul Tillich. Buber received the honor and held it until deposed by the Nazi Regime in 1933.[97]

Rosenzweig showed a remarkable spirit and determination in the face of an illness that was supposed to have ended his life in 1921.

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[94] ABH, 49. The interpretation of this poem, and so the central influence of Buber's wife, will be more clearly understood after reading Chapter 3.

[95] M. Levin, "Sage Who Inspired Hammerskjold," New York Times Magazine, Dec. 3 (1961), 60.

[96] Ibid.

[97] R. Oliver, op. cit., 5.

> From spring 1923 onwards, he could communicate only with a special typewriter which would print a single letter after each turn of a dial. Buber would undertake to translate the Hebrew Bible only with this man. His own work was multiplied by having to prepare everything in detail for his afflicted friend. It may be supposed that he thus helped to prolong and enrich Rosenzweig's life until nearly the end of 1929. During these five years, the friends produced between them ten books on the Bible.[98]

Buber was able to complete five more books before the threat of Nazism forced him to more immediate tasks. The remainder of the work was completed very late in life.

Another creation of Rosenzweig's genius was the Frankfurter Jüdische Lehrhaus, a unique institution of open seminars on Jewish religion, history, theology, Bible, Hebrew language, and literature.

> At its height it had an enrollment of 1,100 students or approximately four percent of the entire Jewish population of Frankfurt--a remarkable figure if one considers the nature and seriousness of its program.[99]

The Lehrhaus unfortunately closed when Rosenzweig died in 1929, but was reopened by Buber and Rabbi Leo Baeck in 1933 to meet the new crisis. The tides of Nazism were rising; the fierce anti-Semitism was gradually unveiled. Buber was deposed from his University Chair and became suddenly faced with the task of setting up an entire Jewish school system. During the next five years his role was heroic; many survivors directly ascribe their ability to resist madness and suicide to Buber's efforts.[100] In fact, in light of his brilliant record it is difficult to understand how the Encyclopedia Britannica and the New Jewish Encyclopedia would mistakenly note that Buber fled Germany in 1933.

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[98] *Ibid.*, 7.

[99] A. Cohen, *op. cit.*, 34.

[100] M. Levin, *op. cit.*, 60.

In 1934, he opposed Hitler's Mein Kampf with Kampf um Israel, and in 1935, delivered his "The Power and the Spirit" speech at the Berlin Philharmonic before an audience containing two hundred S.S. men. He was subsequently banned from speaking at public places and at closed Jewish meetings. Rudolf Schlosser, a Frankfurter Quaker, bravely gave Buber the use of his home for future talks. Finally in 1938, completely silenced, he visited Jerusalem and did not return.[101]

Man of Controversy

At the age of sixty, when most men are completing their life's work and enjoying its fruits, Buber's life and productivity was yet to meet its peak. He did not yet enjoy the stature or prestige readers today might presume, nor was Palestine the immediate home of welcome for this political hero. In fact, ruling Zionists had not forgotten the days of Herzl, now reburied and enshrined in Israel. The Orthodox also looked unkindly on this man who disregarded the Halakhah and publicly proclaimed himself unorthodox. Even the small groups of Hasidim, now intensely conservative and orthodox, felt personally condemned by Buber's liberal interpretation.[102]

Understandably then, the Board of Governors of the Hebrew

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[101] R. Oliver, op. cit., 8-10. M. Levin, loc. cit.

[102] A. Cohen, op. cit., 35.

University objected to the appointment of Buber to their Faculty. Only the persuasion of President Magnes overcame their opposition, and then only by a compromise. Buber was not to teach Jewish theology or philosophy of religion, but only social philosophy.[103]

Buber's unpopularity was further determined when he joined Ernst Simon and Judah Magnes and pushed for the formation of a bi-national Arab-Israeli state. Cohen notes the great bitterness and resentment over the issue, commenting that Buber's efforts were "noble, but not realistic."[104] Nevertheless, open acceptance and dialogue were so much a part of Buber's lived-philosophy that he could not resist pressing his point. He established his home in the exposed area of the Arab quarter. In January, 1962, he, with other leading Jews, appealed to Ben Gurion to abolish the military government in the Arab areas, as well as other forms of discrimination against Israeli Arabs.[105]

After Buber became emeritus of the Hebrew University in 1951, the government asked him to assume leadership of the adult education program which he himself had founded in 1949. His orders were to double its size to meet the heavy immigration demands. The program was designed to instruct teachers who, in turn, would introduce the large numbers of immigrants into the community system of the Kibbutz. This position, held until 1953, allowed Buber to fully apply his concepts of the ideal community, giving life to the larger, more institutional state.[106]

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[103] R. Oliver, op. cit., 11.

[104] A. Cohen, op. cit., 35.

[105] New York Times, Jan. 19 (1962), 2:4.

Another controversy arose over the trial and execution of Adolf Eichmann, the German war criminal. Buber made a much misunderstood appeal for his life, based on the thought that a nation, like an individual, has the right to defend itself, but not to kill.

> Society is merely a group of persons and when it kills one man, it is killing part of itself.[107]

In defense of his position, Buber explained that Eichmann himself was not his concern, for the simple reason that he could not have pity for a man whose actions he could not understand. Rather his concern was for the new generation of Germans and world youths who, faced with the overwhelming sin of their parents, felt a new sense of guilt and humaneness. Such a futile attempt of retribution as the execution of this one individual would only undermine that growth of humanism.[108]

Possibly his most controversial step was to accept the Peace Prize from the German Book Trade at Frankfurt-am-Main in Paulskirche, September 27, 1953. It was obvious that he, an arch-Jew of great international distinction, was accepting from these Germans, murderers of millions of his people, this award of recognition. He divided his audience into various groups. First, those who:

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[106] M. Friedman, op. cit., 8.

[107] "Philosopher's Plea," Time, 79 (Mar. 23 '62), 28.

[108] L. Fellows, New York Times, June 5 (1962), 15:2.

> . . . have so radically removed themselves from the human sphere, so transposed themselves into a sphere of monstrous inhumanity inaccessible to my conception, that not even hatred, much less an overcoming of that hatred, was able to arise in me. And what am I that I could now presume to "forgive."[109]

To a second group--those who knew but did not oppose:

> My heart, which is acquainted with the weakness of men, refuses to condemn my neighbor for not prevailing upon himself to become a martyr.[110]

Then he sees those who did not ask questions or probe the rumors, but held on to their ignorance:

> When I have these men in mind, I am gripped by the thought of the anxiety, likewise well-known to me, of a human creature before a truth which he fears he cannot face.[111]

Finally, he remembered all who stood forth and died rather than be a part of this monstrous inhumanity.

In his final years, Buber received many recognitions. Hermann Hesse nominated him for the Nobel Prize in 1949; he received the Goethe Prize from the University of Hamburg in 1952, the Peace Prize in 1953, the European Erasmus Award in Amsterdam in 1963, and the Freedom of Jerusalem Award in 1965, along with honorary doctorates in humanities, theology, and law. But to a man who preferred people to books, the most memorable tribute occurred on his eighty-fifth birthday: three hundred students from the Hebrew University marched to his home in a torch-light parade to acknowledge their esteem and to hear his words.

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[109] "Genuine Dialogues and the Possibilities of Peace," PW, 232.

[110] Ibid., 233.

[111] Ibid.

On a B.B.C. interview in 1962, Buber was asked of his beliefs in an after-life.

> I think death is the end of everything that we are able to imagine. This means we cannot, and should not, imagine life after death merely as a going on in time. Time is just something we know in this life here, just as we know space; and just as space, so time is being omitted in eternity. I don't even imagine a going on in time, but I am certain of entering eternity. And though I cannot imagine it, I know I shall enter it, and this means that one can be more certain of God's existence than of his own existence.[112]

Felled by a broken hip, Buber died on June 13, 1965, in his home on Lovers of Zion Lane in Jerusalem. His body lay in state at Hebrew University while his lifelong friend, Hugo Bergmann, and Premier Levi Eshkol delivered the eulogies. Then President Zalmon Shazor, the Prime Minister, the President of Hebrew University, and the Hebrew author, S. Y. Agnon, carried him to his final resting place.[113]

The World Jewry obituary apologetically read:

> He was a sage and a prophet not altogether honored in his own country and by his own people.[114]

The New York Times editorial spoke more of the heart of Buber:

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[112] "Martin Buber on Good and Evil," Saturday Review of Literature, 45 (Apr. 7 '62), 18.

[113] R. Oliver, op. cit., 19. This report speaks to the contrary of M. Beek and S. Weiland, op. cit., 9: "The government of Israel was not represented at his funeral."

[114] R. Oliver, op. cit., 19.

> Love, he said again and again, is the key to the mystery of existence and points the way to divinity. "Every particular thou is a glimpse through to the eternal Thou." Men find God by discovering each other; there is no other way. . . .
>
> Because Martin Buber lived, there is more love in the world than there would have been without him. And for him that was the reason above all others for the gift of life.[115]

His own final tribute had been written just eight months before:

> THE FIDDLER
>
> Here on the world's edge at this hour I have
> Wondrously settled my life.
> Behind me is a boundless circle
> The All is silent, only that fiddler fiddles.
> Dark one, already I stand in covenant with you,
> Ready to learn from your tones
> Wherein I became guilty without knowing it.
> Let me feel, let there be revealed
> To this hale soul each wound
> That I have incorrigibly inflicted and
>   remained in illusion.
> Do not stop, holy player, before then![116]

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[115] New York Times, June 14 (1965), 32:2.

[116] ABH, 229.

CHAPTER III

BUBER'S PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPT OF WORLD

I and Thou and the Philosophy of Dialogue have not only introduced Martin Buber into our conversations but made him a part of our view of life. We are close friends of Buber the Philosopher. But when he stands in the threshold of his ancestral home and speaks to us in the terms and legends of Hasidism, we feel foreign and uncomfortable. We are less at home with Buber the Jew.

This chapter develops Buber's "world" concept in his concise philosophical language so that it may provide the reader with a mental outline in clear and familiar terms. In turn, the outline will make his introduction into the parallel but foreign Hasidic formulation intelligible and comfortable. A presentation of the philosophical thought will illuminate and sharpen the inner meaning and dimensions of the Hasidic thought.

The question, then, is stated: what philosophical meaning does the concept "world" hold for Buber and how did he arrive at his particular concept? The development is part of the answer.

Kant

Buber was raised with a "naive, pre-Kantian, 'objective' view of the universe,"[1] a world formed in the dimensions of space and time. But during his fourteenth year, he reported that he was intrigued by the conflicting images of the edge of space and its further spacelessness, and of the beginning of time and its prior timelessness. These contradictory alternatives so enveloped his thinking that he confesses that he was, at times, on the edge of madness--so much so that he "seriously thought of avoiding it by suicide."[2]

Relief came to the boy at age fifteen through his discovery of Kant's *Prolegomena to All Future Metaphysics*.

> This book showed me that space and time are only the forms in which my human view of what is, necessarily works itself out; that is, they were not attached to the inner nature of the world, but to the nature of my senses.[3]

Time and space are only the perceptions of man--forms sent out from the inner nature of the world. In another commentary on this "break-through" Buber calls the real world the "incomprehensible":

> As he [Buber himself at 14] appears to me in my memory, after so many years through Kant, who understood time as the form of "our" perception, the way could open to him to ask the question: "But if time is only a form in which we perceive, where *are* 'we'? Are we not in the timeless? Are we not in eternity?" . . . What is meant by eternity is what is incomprehensible in itself, that which sends

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[1] M. Friedman, *Martin Buber: Life of Dialogue*, 34.

[2] *BMM*, 136.

[3] *Ibid*.

> forth time out of itself and sets us in that relationship to it that we call existence. To him who recognizes this, the reality of the world no longer shows an absurd and uncanny face: because eternity is.[4]

Thus, by way of Kant, Buber sees two "worlds"--the first is the "inner nature," an "incomprehensible" but real world; the second, an image of the first. Although developed out of his experience with the real world, the second is man's creation, which gives order to the chaos he has met in his life-experience. Such images are necessary for survival. Man must give his experience a sequence, a continuum of place, time, and causality. Because of this necessity,

> Buber recognizes this world. It is, to him, the world of orientation, an abstract concept, born out of the concept and yielding itself to it. But this world gives no access to Reality. . . .[5]

The question is, at this point, epistemological. As with Kant, Buber's concern is with "knowing" the world. In an 1928 article, Buber distinguishes two types of knowing: a *philosophical knowing* which regards a thing as an object, and a *religious knowing*[6] which is a relationship of being. Such a knowing is used in the Book of Genesis when it says that Adam *knew* his wife, Eve.[7]

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[4] *AF*, *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*, 13.

[5] H. Kohn, *Martin Buber*, 244 (author's translation).

[6] *ABH*, 111. Buber's use of the term "religious" should not be misunderstood. It does not refer to a separate area of life, distinct from others, but to "the reality, namely the *whole* existence of the real man in the real world of God, an existence that unites all that is partial. . . ."

[7] *Gen*. 4:1.

The first is an "indispensable necessity and duty of human existence, guaranteeing continuum of thought, and laying a foundation for the cohesion of the experience and thought of mankind."[8] Yet it looks away from the concrete situation.

Kant helped Buber recognize that philosophical knowing limits a man's knowledge to that which has been formed beforehand in his own mental categories. Thus Buber rejects _Weltanschauungen_ because, as systems, they are human creations which provide a mental security, but which insulate or protect one from the real world. This is not to say that philosophical knowledge is totally false, for it is based on real experience and announces the real world. But beyond the limits of philosophical knowing

> . . . there arises, single and underivable, the unique reality of the world _concretum_ presented me by God: the continual creation in each moment.[9]

This moment is not foreseeable or foreknowable. It is not caught in any world continuity or world-view. "I must _enter_ into the religious situation, must _hold_ _my_ ground in the face of the world _concretum_ presented to me."[10]

But it has not been clearly stated _how_ one reaches the world of reality, if indeed it is possible at all.

Daniel

Daniel, Dialogues on Realization, 1913, is Buber's first major philosophical work. As a transitional work, it is still epistemological in concern, still shows the strong influence of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard,[11] yet it lays down the basic seminal patterns of Buber's later thought.[12]

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[8] Philosophical and Religious World View," _ABH_, 130-1.

[9] _Ibid_., 132.

[10] _Ibid_.

In his "Translator's Introduction" of Daniel, Maurice Friedman notes an additional element introduced by Buber through the influence of his Berlin teacher, Wilhelm Dilthey.[13] Dilthey based his thought on the basic difference between Naturwissenschaften and Geisteswissenschaften. In the first, the knower is an objective scientific observer; in the second, the knower cannot detach himself, but must participate.

> For it is through his participation that he discovers both the typical and the unique in the aspects of the human life he is studying.[14]

Here Buber finds that the key to the real world is participation, the open involvement of the whole person. So, in addition to an orientation relationship with the world, Buber describes a realization relationship of subjective involvement.

> There is a two fold relation of man to his experience: the orienting or classifying and the realizing or making real. What you experience, doing and suffering, creating and enjoying, you can register in the structure of experience for the sake of your aims or you can grasp it for its own sake in its own power and splendor.[15]

By way of example, he discusses his relation with a stone pine. First he compares, contrasts, classifies, and reports on it. In the end, he says, "you experience nothing of the truth of this being. And now seek to draw near to this stone pine itself . . . with all your directed power; receive the tree, surrender yourself to it."[16]

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[11] M. Friedman, op. cit., 34-5.

[12] M. Friedman, "Translator's Introduction," Daniel, 64.

[13] Ibid., 4.

[14] Ibid.

[15] D, 64.

If the reader will permit a more lengthy quote, the two ways of knowing might be clarified and interrelated.

> A soul meets the shore of the world. Immediately the whirlpool of happenings plunges over it like an endless sandstorm that threatens to destroy it. It braces itself to withstand it. And see, therein is decided of what nature a soul it is: how it withstands the whirlpool. The one thinks only of protection. It surrenders itself entirely to the inherited powers, the traditional arts of self-defense which educate its senses to perceive in place of the whirlpool an ordered world conceived within the framework of basic principles of experience. And indeed this _is_ protection.
>
> Not so the other. It finds no satisfaction in the protection that the inherited powers accord it. It lets it stand, to be sure, the auxiliary world in which alone it can live with men; it accepts it and learns its laws. But deep within it grows and endures the readiness to go out to meet the naked whirlpool. Armed with what? With nothing other than with the magic of its direction, its own, inborn, unique direction, belonging to it and no other.[17]

Note first that the real world is primary; it precedes man's orientation, and is fundamental to it. Buber describes it as a state of chaos, like a whirlpool. The image possibly comes from the opening lines of his German translation of the Hebrew Bible:

> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,
> And the earth was chaos and confusion;
> Darkness (lay) over the face of the primeval whirlpool. . . .[18]

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[16] _D_, 54.

[17] _D_, 56-7.

[18] M. Beek and S. Weiland, _Martin Buber_, 29.

One response to the threat of this discontinuous real is orientation, "to educate its senses to perceive an ordered world." It is as if he had invented this order; his prime, if not his only motive, is security.

The alternative response does not reject all orientation. He "lets it stand," even "accepts it and learns its laws." Buber does not reject all orientation or find it of no value or evil *in se*. He does reject a clinging to it to the exclusion of realization.

So the ultimate response, using his orientation as a platform, is to step out into a naked experience of the chaos of the discontinuous real world, that is, into realization.

To clarify the thought, Buber states that the first response of orientation and the second of realization are abstractions; there is something of realization and orientation in all men. It becomes a question of which pattern of response predominates in the individual person.

> It is tempting, Ulrich, when one has recognized two forces of the soul so different, now also to construct two different classes of men and to lend to the first the one, to the second the other as their fixed and exclusive primal properties, . . . a realizing kind of man, an orienting kind of man also do not exist. A purely realizing man would disappear into God; a purely orienting man degenerate into nothingness. Rather realization and orientation dwell close together. . . .[19]

Total realization would disorientate the man into chaotic confusion and overwhelm him out of existence. Total orientation would shut man off from the real world so completely that he would lose all touch with reality--he would live "out of touch." Rather, there is an interrelationship between the two; the one alternates into the other and back again. First man orientates himself with some understanding and relationship to the real world by interpreting his experiences. Then he ventures out into an unqualified and unpredetermined renewal of experience with the real world, as far as he can without losing his equilibrium. Finally he returns and reorientates himself, absorbing his new experiences into an adjusted pattern. The requirement is only that he recognize the orientating paths as secondary and subservient to the realization.

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[19] *D*, 70.

> Hours of inserting follow hours of realization and must so follow. . . . In creativity, in contrast, mature orientation is also included, but as a dependent and serving function. . . . The realizing man is the genuinely real. For as the things that stand in his life-experience become reality, so also he himself.[20]

In some way, man's very act of realization brings about order and unity, that is, it creates both the world experienced and the person experiencing. Friedman clarifies:

> Realized experience creates the essential form of existence, only here can what we call "things" and what we call "I" find their reality.[21]

One final observation should be made on the lengthy quote given above to outline the basis of Buber's thought. Direction, or more exactly, direction and power, are the keys to reality:

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[20] D, 70-1.

[21] M. Friedman, "Translator's Introduction," Daniel, 22. It should be noted here that the sense of the word "create" does not mean "bring from nothing," but to "bring potentiality into actuality," to fulfill, realize, make whole.

the qualities that enable the soul to survive the chaos of reality. Without them, the soul would be swept along by the whirlpool, directionless. Power and direction will be more fully discussed below.

Maturation of Thought

Daniel was published in 1913. Although he here lays down his basic pattern of thought, Buber almost immediately corrects and amplifies it. He speaks of these developments, not as changes or as a conversion of thought, but "only a process of clarification, . . . in correspondence with my own progress toward clarity."[22] Between Daniel and I and Thou (1923), these "clarifications" are best expressed in "With a Monist" (1914) and his "Preface to the 1923 Edition" of Reden über das Judentum.

The quality of participation carries his thought beyond the limits of epistemology into the area of ontology. It is no longer the Kantian problem of seeking to know the world, but a matter of embracing it. "The world is not comprehensible, but it is embraceable: through the embracing of one of its beings."[23]

Related to this development, Buber also senses that the action does not occur within the subject as he observes the world about him, but between the person and the world. From a subject to object relationship, he conceives an intersubjective relationship with active elements on both sides.

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[22] OJ, 3.

[23] PW, 27. See also: M. Friedman, "Translator's Introduction," D, 41.

In Daniel, Buber recounts a relationship between himself and a stone pine,[24] as alluded to above, and also between himself and a piece of mica.[25] Although these relations hold similarities with later I-and-Thou relationships, "distance" is not preserved and the one is absorbed into the other, realizing an immediate unity and identity of the object within the subject. A year later in "With a Monist,"[26] Buber reappraises this concept, stating that the supposed "object" is not object at all, but subject, with its own sphere of activity.

> Each thing and being has a twofold nature: the passive . . . rationizable, and the other, the active, . . . nonrationizable. This is the confronting, the shaping, the bestowing in things. He who truly experiences a thing so that it springs up to meet him and embraces him of itself has in that thing known the world.[27]

> What you extract and combine is always only the passivity of things. But their activity, their effective reality, reveals itself only to the loving man who knows them. And thus he knows the world. In the features of the beloved, whose self he realizes, he discerns the enigmatic countenance of the universe.[28]

Reality--"world"--is not a fixed condition or some "thing," but a quality: a relationship between "the inexpressible revolving of things and the experiencing powers of my senses."[29] It is relative to the intensity of our experiencing. This word, "experiencing," is troublesome to Buber because it is so commonly misunderstood. One may not seek to rape the world of its secret through subjective experience, that is, try to "experience" it, but must go to it in one of its individual manifestations, openly and without device or prejudice. It is the relative purity of the meeting that results in the greater realization. The loving man

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[24] D, 54.

[25] D, 140.

[26] PW, 27.

[27] Ibid.

[28] PW, 29.

[29] Ibid., 28.

> . . . does not think of inserting the experienced thing into relations to other things; at the moment of experience nothing else exists, nothing save the beloved thing, filling out the world and indistinguishably coinciding with it.
>
> Every true deed is a loving deed. All true deeds arise from contact with a beloved thing and flow into the universe. Any true deed brings, out of lived unity, unity into the world. Unity is not a property of the world, but its task. To form unity out of the world is our never-ending work.[30]

Unity, however, is another concept that Buber wishes to clarify. As noted above, Daniel's relationship dissolves distance and immediately establishes a unity within the subject. Later reflection pronounces this: "too much the easy word"; unity does not come about so facilely.

The "Preface to the 1923 Edition" of Reden über das Judentum (translated in On Judaism) speaks of religion and God, in the manner already defined. Here again, religious life refers to the total life of the individual in his realization of world. God is not a third person, an object, but a second person with whom I am relating. "Man does not possess God Himself, but he encounters God Himself."[31] True, a third-person image or formulation of this meeting exists within man, such as the concept "God," but the actual experience is outside or "between" them--"a reality of their relationship; the mutual reality of God and man."[32]

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[30] Ibid., 29-30.

[31] OJ, 5.

This meeting then does not yield God or full unity now, in the immediacy, but is only a movement toward Him and toward unity. "It is . . . an honest movement in the direction of God, a swinging toward Him without any reservations; it is man's coming to meet Him."[33]

Again, this does not mean that God Himself is a "becoming" reality, as an idea "becomes" or develops in our mind; God *is*. Nevertheless we can say that He is being "realized" into reality if we define reality as that which is realized by us through relationship. The task is to move toward a final unity, to realize God in this correct sense.

> We ought to understand that to "realize God" means to prepare the world for God, as a place for His reality--to help the world become God-real (*gottwirklich*); it means, in other and sacred words, to make reality one. This is our service in the Kingdom's becoming.
>
> Are we capable of that much? We are capable of doing our share in effecting this one thing for whose sake we are on earth, the one thing that God will not achieve without us.[34]

During this period, Buber makes three developments: (1) a move from an epistemological to an ontological form of relation; (2) a step from a subject-object to an intersubjective relationship; and (3) from a unity fully realized in the present to an ultimate unity to be completed sometime in the unforeseeable future. Out of these three developments, he republishes his philosophical thoughts in the format of the I and the Thou.

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[32] *Ibid*., 4.

[33] *OJ*, 7.

[34] *OJ*, 9.

I and Thou

In *I and Thou* (1923) Buber proposes two forms of relation, the *I-It* and the *I-Thou*, basically corresponding to the Orientation and Realization of *Daniel*. In the first sentence, he reminds us "there is *one* world"[35] . . . which bears this twofold polarity of using and experiencing, and of genuine meeting. "This twofoldness runs through the whole world, through each person, each human activity."[36] He proposes no easy shibboleth distinctly and finally dividing all life, but only a sober reappraisal of the concreteness of this life.

The relationships are intersubjective, formed by the "between." "If *Thou* is said, then *I* of the combination *I-Thou* is said along with it."[37] "When *Thou* is spoken, the speaker has not a 'thing' for his object,"[38] but a subject in relation with another subject. The *I* of the *I-Thou* is different from the *I* of the *I-It*.[39]

In each individual subject, man meets the universal world, but these individual subjects are divided into three spheres: (1) life with nature, (2) life with men, and (3) life with spiritual beings.[40] The second sphere with men is the clearest, bearing full mutuality and serving as epitome of the other two.[41] Yet it has its limitations in that it cannot be endured as permament. An I-Thou may arise out of an I-It relation, but it is bound to return to that world of It. There is here, then, an alternation between I-Thou and I-It. This alternation is necessary to the design of life, yet it is possible only so long as the It, as orienting, serves rather than dominates the Thou. "Without It man cannot live. But he who lives with It alone is not a man."[42]

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[35] *IT*, 3. (Italics mine.)

[36] R. Smith, "Introduction," *IT*, ix.

[37] *IT*, 3.

[38] *IT*, 4.

[39] *IT*, 3.

[40] *IT*, 6.

The first sphere is more difficult to comprehend as an active meeting on both sides, standing only on the "threshold" of meeting; it touches but is not fully mutual.[43]

The third sphere, involving the Eternal Thou is again known to us through analogy with the second sphere,[44] yet is distinct from the second in three ways: (1) It not only engages in meeting, it begets it;[45] (2) We perceive no Thou addressing us in the clear, direct sense of mutuality with man, but nonetheless, we feel we are being addressed and we answer. The universe communicates to us the address of the Eternal Thou;[46] (3) While each I-Thou relationship with man arises out of the It and is doomed to return to It, the Eternal Thou can never become an It. It is the continual, never-ending character of the Eternal

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[41] IT, 103.

[42] IT, 33-4.

[43] IT, 124-6.

[44] R. Smith, "Introduction," IT, ix.

[45] IT, 6.

[46] IT, 103.

Thou addressing us always, that maintains the real world. It prevents an absolutizing of the I-It and destines all life to a final realization of unity.

Each of these points of Buber's concept of world will be clarified. But before attempting a development of each one, there is one final general amplification to be presented: Buber's anthropological philosophy.

Anthropological World

As growth and development in his thinking moved Buber from his immature Philosophy of Realization (Daniel) to the mature Dialogical Philosophy (I and Thou), so further questions and amplifications produced an Anthropological Philosophy (Between Man and Man and Knowledge of Man). This, too, amplifies his philosophical concept of "world." Before outlining Buber's "world" related to man as an ontological fact, it is helpful to see how he pictures man's chronological growth toward relation.

As with primitive man, the child is born only on the threshold of the I-Thou relationship, a description Buber also uses for the first sphere of meeting, nature. The child is not yet conscious of his I as distinct from the Thou. But he has an "inborn Thou," a potentiality.[47] Gradually, as he matures, he steps back with exclusiveness and observes what is over-against himself, seeing it as an It. "He differentiates between the mass of objects and his body as separate existence."[48] Then he becomes free to re-enter into relationship with that which is over-against him in a full I-Thou relationship, realizing his inborn Thou in the meeting as well as the presence of that which is over against him. Note that the word "realizing" does not mean merely "becoming aware of," but "creating," "bringing into actuality."

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[47] IT, 24-30.

[48] OJ, 13-4.

Here Buber sees a twofold movement as the principle of human life, the one movement a presupposition to the other. "I propose to call the first movement 'the prime setting at a distance' and the second 'entering into relation.'"[49]

Distance and Relation are not two parallel moments; the first creates the supposition for the second. "Distance provides the human situation; relation provides man's becoming in that situation."[50] One can enter relation only if he has first established himself on his own ground as an independent opposite.

Only man can perform this act of setting at a distance because only man has a "world." The animal has a sphere of action, a realm, but there is no "play" between the animal and its world. It responds to stimuli without option. It cannot distance itself.[51]

"Only when a structure of a being is independently over-against a living being, an independent opposite, does a world exist."[52] This world of man is an unbroken continuum, including not only all that is known and experienced, but all that can be known--now and in the future.[53]

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[49] KM, 60.

[50] KM 64.

[51] M. Beek and S. Weiland, Martin Buber, 54.

[52] KM, 61.

> The beaver's dam is extended in a time-realm, but the planted tree is rooted in the world of time, and he who plants the first tree is he who will expect the Messiah.[54]

This realization of a "world" must be further explained. First another distinction is given: individual and person. In some characteristics, this distinction operates on similar lines to the I-It and the I-Thou. One is born an individual and becomes a person through meeting. A person makes his appearance by entering into relation with another person.[55]

> There are not two kinds of men, but two poles of humanity. No man is pure person and no man pure individuality. None is wholly real, and none wholly unreal. Every man lives in the twofold I. But there are men so defined by person that they may be called persons, and men so defined by individuality that they may be called individuals.[56]

On the one hand, the stronger the I of the primary word I-Thou, the more personal is the man. On the other hand, if a man does not realize his inborn Thou in what meets him, he is a "self-contradiction." In the crisis of the call to be person, he refuses and hides in the security of his images of his world. "He does not know the world--no world exists for him--only his images of an illusionary world."[57]

Therefore, the primary ontological reality for man is relationship. Out of this is realized both the I and the Thou; both the person and the world.[58]

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[53] M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue, 80.

[54] KM, 62.

[55] IT, 62.

[56] IT, 62

[57] IT, 65-70.

> The fundamental fact of human existence is neither the individual as such nor the aggregate as such. Each considered by itself, is a mighty abstraction. . . . The fundamental fact of human existence is man with man.[59]

Through this ontological prior meeting, the individual is realized into personality. Only in this way does he become person.

Also through this meeting, the I confirms the world over against him into being.[60] "Men need, and it is granted to them, to confirm one another in their individual being by means of genuine meeting."[61]

Man meets the world not only realizing it in an epistemological sense, but in an ontological sense as well. He not only recognizes a "becoming" unity and wholeness, which his orientation symbolizes in structure, but his very meeting is bringing about this unity and wholeness.

> "That ordering of known phenomena which we call the world, is indeed the composite work of a thousand human generations." But he [Buber] goes on to say that "this

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[58] N. Rotenstreich, "The Right and the Limitations of Buber's Dialogical Thought," The Philosophy of Martin Buber, 97 ff.

[59] BMM, 203. (Some critics state that this is relation without content. Friedman responds: "A misunderstanding which is only possible for those who have never grasped Buber's existentialism of dialogue as 'grounded on the certainty that the meaning of existence is open and accessible in the actual lived concrete.' . . . It is the wholly particular content of each moment of lived dialogue in which the reality one meets is neither subjectivized nor objectivized but responded to." "Martin Buber's Credo," ABH, 22.)

[60] KM, 69-71. Cf. also BMM, 29, 96.

[61] KM, 69.

> world has come into existence through our meeting with existing being unknowable to us in its own nature. Though the becoming of a world takes place through us, our social ordering of the world rests, in its turn, on the priority of the meeting with existing being, and this meeting is not our work."[62]

This "world" is becoming through our genuine meeting.

Power and Direction: Key to Finding "World"

> This is the Kingdom of God, Reinhold: the kingdom of danger and of risk, of eternal beginning and of eternal becoming, of opening spirit and of deep realization, the kingdom of holy insecurity.[63]

The I-Thou relationship is not an unqualified good. It is, in fact, a risk and a sacrifice. It is a risk because "the primary word can only be spoken with the whole being. He who gives himself to it may withhold nothing of himself."[64] It takes one out of the security of an orientated world into the discontinuous present, where, stripped of all safeguards, one embraces the wholly other. "Orientation promises security; realization has nothing to promise. It says if you wish to become mine, descend into this abyss."[65] Why do it? Because without it, there is no I--no becoming a person.

It is sacrifice, because of "the endless possibility that is offered up on the altar of form."[66] All forms which up to that moment gave perspective, must now be renounced. The endless possibility about to be faced makes this demand.

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[62] M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue, 84.

[63] D, 95.

[64] IT, 10.

[65] D, 96.

[66] IT, 10.

An I-Thou meeting is not to be regarded as an unqualified good. It cannot help you to sustain life, but only gives you a glimpse of reality. It is "seductive and magical, tearing us away to dangerous extremes, loosening the well-tried context, leaving more questions than satisfactions behind them, shattering security."[67] It is entering into the whirlpool of chaos which would surely envelop us, were it not for powerful direction.

The Thou cannot be sustained by man in his present condition. "This is the exalted melancholy of our fate, that every thou in our world must become an it."[68]

Thus, the only key by which an individual might meet and realize "world" is the combination of power and direction.

> Daniel: Not over the things, not around the things, not between the things--in each thing, in the experience of each thing, the gate of the One opens to you if you bring with you the magic key that unlocks it: the perfection of your direction.
>
> The Woman: You forget the power!
>
> Daniel: No, for direction is only perfection when it is fulfilled with power: the power to live the whole event.[69]

Decision is one's inborn choice; that is, out of the almost infinite possible directions that swirl around the individual in the chaos of events, he chooses one direction that is his, and follows it. This one direction is found within the person, raised up out of him. It is not invented or chosen capriciously, but inborn and brought to life--a potentiality actualized, and so made real.

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[67] IT, 34.

[68] IT, 16.

[69] D, 53.

> Direction is that primal tension of a human soul which moves it to choose and realize this and no other out of the infinity of possibilities.[70]

The orientating man will decide according to a pre-set pattern of history; the realizing man will choose from within. Some will call this choice subjective, but it is a true choice out of being.[71]

If a man is to leave the security of the pre-set pattern and go out to the whirlpool of presentness, he must decide out ot his being. Otherwise, the forces of chaos will ravish him, dismembering his soul and swallowing him up. Such a fate is evil--the first type of evil for Buber--"decisionlessness." "If there were a devil, it would not be one who decided against God, but one who, in eternity, came to no decision."[72]

But direction by itself is not enough. All of one's power must accompany it. Power, sometimes referred to as the "evil impulse," is that basic force or energy within man. If it is regarded as evil, something to be contained or even suppressed, it will accumulate and become negative, destructive. "But if brought into the service of responsibility . . . it is transformed and made radiant by the intention which enters into it."[73]

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[70] D, 56.

[71] D, 92.

[72] IT, 52. Cf. also BMM, 78.

[73] M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue, 65.

Such a use of the evil impulse with direction redeems it. Its creativity is the energy of a life lived in relation--a life in which the It is increasingly interpenetrated with Thou.

Buber observed a duality within man of good and evil, of direction and evil power. To decide, he must unite both of these into his whole soul, and so decide. "In the realm entrusted to him, such a man perfects the work of creation."[74]

> In man's decision, the divided world decides for unity. In the act of decision, man knows nothing more than that he must choose, and even this he does not know with his reasoning faculties, but with his being; when, however, he chooses "with all his soul," the mystery is consummated and the spirit of God hovers over the waters.[75]

The Values and Dangers of Orientation

> You cannot hold on to life without it, its reliability sustains you; but should you die in it, your grave would be in nothingness.[76]

A less penetrating reading of I and Thou might leave the reader with the impression that I-It is of negative value, or even to be identified with evil. This is inaccurate. "I-It is not to be regarded as simply evil."[77] It establishes an order and a stability in life, sustains life as we know it. Only through forms and patterns of thought can we communicate with one another. Science, with all its amazing developments, as well as all other fields of academic investigation, belong to this sphere.

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[74] OJ, 66.

[75] OJ, 65-6.

[76] IT, 32.

[77] M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue, 60.

Nor would it be true to say that its forms and categories, which give us security and stability, are fictitious. They are based on real life-experience, and are inserted, through reflection, into an intelligible continuum. They "reflect deep rhythmic tracts of life-experience" although "to be sure, only symbolically."[78] The categories are of _It_ and not of reality, but they reflect man's experience of reality in analogical terms.

The world of _It_ should be one side of an alternating process in which the individual is given the stability and orientation necessary to be sustained. With this security, he goes out and endures the chaos of reality in real meeting. Survival in the encounter comes only by his inner direction. When he has met the present moment, he must then return, reorientate himself and his new life-experience, and renew his stability. So "reorientated," he again goes out to embrace more of reality. This process, called "alternation" by Friedman, will be more thoroughly investigated later. It is noted here to show that the world of _It_ becomes evil when it ceases to serve realization and seeks to dominate or to become absolute.

> For everywhere where a knowing was formed, where it began, where it was creative, it was not orienting but realizing; immersion in pure life-experience, and what was thus found was carried over into the bed of unregistering. And everywhere where orienting knowledge ruled autonomously it was robbery, for it took place at the cost of the mothering, nourishing juices of life-experience and was only able to transpose the realization in the greater into a little need or a little security. And it is this predominance of the

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[78] _D_, 65.

> orienting from which I suffer and against which I rebel--for the sake of the realizing which creates out of the life-experience of reality.[79]

Such a domination snuffs out meeting and "robs him of the reality of his own I."[80] Man's power to enter into relation is decreased; the process of realizing his person and the world over against him is stifled. Security is established; the life of the spirit is eclipsed.

If the first type of evil is decisionlessness, the second and more fearful type is lack of relation. Here man no longer seeks to meet the real world; he mistakes his own image of self and of reality as if they were reality and so withdraws within himself, basing all his actions on this illusion. He is the "self-contradiction" described above.

> He now lives and acts according to this viewpoint; he thus commits, as it has been put, "the inner untruth against God and himself." . . . More exactly, he commits with his existence the lie against being.[81]

This very condition is announced by Buber, in his philosophy of "world," as the crisis of our age.

> Daniel: God once created the world in six days, but since then we have learned the technique of creation. With its help the apes of God make the world in one day, and it is more interesting.
>
> Ulrich: Why so bitter, Daniel? Let them be!
>
> Daniel: Shall I not be bitter against the signature of this age? . . . The fact is that the power of realization cannot be injured by any

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[79] D, 65-6.

[80] IT, 37-9.

[81] GE, 110-11.

> earthly need or necessity; the only force which can attack and oppress it is the predominance of orientation. And that is the predominance that has insinuated itself into the blood of our age and dissolved its reality in order to put in its blood, appearance. For before all other ages of civilization, ours is the age that does not realize.[82]

Both the history of individuals and of the human race confirm the fact that the ordinary alternation between I-Thou and I-It has been disturbed and threatened by a continual growth of the world of It.[83]

The danger is not simply the progress of science and the explosion of knowledge and technical information, but also the "thousand petty means of life which have taken on the features of ends in themselves," so that man is now lost in his instruments and no longer has a true personal goal. "Human life becomes impersonal, mediate and instrumental, and realization is replaced by appearance and imitation."[84]

Eternal Thou

It is possible to project mentally the existence of an Absolute It--a movement to orientation and security among men to the point at which realization and meeting would become totally eliminated from human life. At times, this seems to have occurred.

But Buber presents one factor that makes such an absolutization of It impossible--the presence of the Eternal Thou.

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[82] D, 74.

[83] IT, 37.

[84] M. Friedman, "Translator's Introduction," Daniel, 22.

The second sphere of man's meeting--man with man--serves as epitome with the less obvious but more basic meeting with God. Buber calls God the "Eternal Thou" to express the nature of our relationship with God. He is that being which is "most directly, most nearly and lastingly, over-against us, that may properly only be addressed, not expressed."[85] God relates to us person to person. Here we meet and experience Him face to face. But we cannot express him in third-person ("He") terms. We can develop analogous terms--images--but do not possess the Eternal Thou in them.

We deduce from this that God is distinct from man. While all other thou's fall eventually back into the world of It, God cannot become It--He is the One sustaining, Eternal Thou. We may turn our attention away from this basic Thou to an image of Him, but for all of our change, He continues to address us out of the basic make-up of life.[86]

> It is only our nature that compels us to draw the Eternal Thou into the world and talk of it. By virtue of this great privilege of pure relation there exists the unbroken world of Thou which binds up the isolated moments of relation in a life of world solidarity.[87]

Where do we meet the Eternal Thou? What is His relation to "world"? Buber maintains, with qualification, that God is in the "world" of relation. "The extended lines of relation meet in the Eternal Thou." "Every particular thou is a glimpse through to the Eternal Thou." "The 'inborn thou' is realized in each relation, and . . . consummated only in the direct relation with the Thou that by its very nature cannot become it."[88]

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[85] IT, 80-1.

[86] "Religion and Reality," EG, 13-24. Cf. also IT, 75, 98-100.

[87] IT, 98-100. Cf. also M. Friedman, Martin Buber: Life of Dialogue, 73.

This Thou is distinct from our images of God. An atheist may deny God's existence. Yet, if he is a person, his life is an address to the Thou of his life--the Thou that is not limited by any other. Whether he recognizes it or not, he addresses the Eternal Thou.[89]

This Thou gathers up all others, not in a pantheistic sense, but in a panentheistic sense--God in all as source who, through relation, begets all other relations, begets world through meeting.

> "Here the world, there God" is the language of It; "God in the world" is another language of It; but to eliminate or leave behind nothing at all, to include the whole world in the Thou, to give the world its due and its truth, to include nothing beside God but everything in him--this is full and complete relation.[90]

How can a total relationship with the Eternal Thou include, yet not conflict with the other I-Thou relationships of man? The difficulty lies in the inadequacy of our concepts. God is Person in the sense that he relates to us personally--in direct relationship. But our concept of person contains limits. God has no limitations; His personhood encompasses all limited relationships.

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[88] IT, 75.

[89] IT, 76.

[90] IT, 79.

He is Absolute Person.

> The man who turns to him therefore need not turn away from any other I-Thou relations; but he properly brings them to him, and lets them be fulfilled "in the face of God."[91]

"If you hallow this life, you meet the living God."[92] Our purpose in meeting God is not to confirm ourselves, but to confirm the meaning of the world.[93]

If we recognize the active presence of the Eternal Thou in the center of our world--the Thou that can never become an It--we will also see that the world can never capitulate absolutely to the It. Thou never ceases; relation will always continue. Man will continue to become person and the world will continue to be realized through man's embracing it in the I-Thou meeting. Alternation will continue, and the progression towards wholeness and unity will be realized eventually.

> It is this unbroken world of Thou which assures us that relation can never fall apart into complete duality, that evil can never become radically real and absolute. Without this limit to the reality of evil we would have no assurance that I-It can become I-Thou, that men and cultures can turn back to God in a fundamental act of reversal, the teshuvah. Without this limit the world of It would be evil in itself and incapable of being redeemed.[94]

Turning of Man's Spirit

Viewing the extremity of the present oppression of the world of It, Buber says "the sickness of our age is like that of no other age, and it belongs together with all of them."[95] History is not a series of cycles, one smoothly spiraling on into the other, but a struggle of ascent into realization, followed by a [illegible] descent into security and systematization. Only when oppressiveness of the established It becomes unendurable does the spirit of man "turn." Responding to the address of the Eternal Thou, he breaks through, turns, and with the force of his whole being, again encounters the Thou.[96]

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[91] IT, 135-7.

[92] IT, 79.

[93] IT, 115.

[94] M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue, 73.

> Teshuvah, return, is the name given to the act of decision in its ultimate intensification; it denotes the decisive turning point in a man's life, the renewing, total reversal in the midst of the normal course of his existence. When in the midst of "sin," that is, in the decisionlessness, the will to decision awakens, the cover of routine life bursts open, and primal forces break through, storming heavenward. In the man who returns, creation begins anew; in his renewal the substance of the world is renewed.[97]

The motive for this turning is the need aroused by the uttermost sundering of the human spirit, cutting it off more and more completely from its source of life.[98] Nevertheless, once the spirit has broken through to new and deeper realization, it will eventually have to return to the world of It. Alternation will begin once again. It may serve the Thou for a time, but inevitably man will again succumb to the oppression of It.

> One cannot simply bring about healing, rescue with a single blow. But the disappointments belong to the way. There is no other way than that of this miscarrying, that is the way of faithful faith.[99]

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[95] IT, 55.

[96] IT, 102.

[97] OJ, 67.

[98] ABH, 151.

[99] ABH, 151-2.

Path to Unity

In *I and Thou*, Buber designates *I-Thou* and *I-It* as "primary words." He notes that they have many names at different times and in different worlds, but that this basic duality is inherent in nature;[100] whatever other names have been given them, his terms underlie and signify the poles of this duality.

> All wisdom of the ages has the duality of the world as its subject; its point of departure is to know it, its goal to overcome it. However it names the two forces that it makes known--spirit and matter, form and material, being and becoming, positive and negative element, or with any of the other pair of names--it has in mind the overcoming of their tension, the unification of their duality. It seeks this through many ways, but none of its ways can satisfy him who is faithful to the totality of his life-experience. . . . The tensions that he experienced in the storm he does not desire to do away with but to embrace.[101]

He titles this the "meta-cosmical primal form,"[102] and chooses many specifically different but generically related dual terms: distance and relation, fate and destiny, gnosis and faith, *pistis* and *emunah*, appearance and reality, orientation and realization, etc.

This basic duality of world expresses itself to man as power and tension, and creates in him a longing for unity. He senses that his task in life is to overcome this tension and achieve unity.[103] Historically, man has attempted to escape by making the duality absolute, permanent, and irresolvable, or by resolving the tension conceptually. He considers one pole as the single reality and mentally denies reality to the other.

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[100] *IT*, 24.

[101] *D*, 137.

[102] *IT*, 101.

[103] *IT*, 136.

Buber, on the contrary, realizes that true unity can neither be forced, nor conceived mentally, but only realized by meeting the polarities as they are. Neither pole can be excluded, nor can a "middle" path be followed, but the whole must be embraced.[104] This is the path of the "narrow ridge"--the way of "holy insecurity."

> True unity is a unity which excludes nothing and destroys nothing, but transforms the stubborn material of life into oneness through the realizing action of men. It is the unity which includes all evil, for it can accept nothing less than the whole, but just for this reason it is never completely attained but comes forth ever again as purer and sharper duality. Each new act of inner unification enables the individual to take to himself ever greater tensions of world-polarity and bring them to unity.[105]

This embrace is a movement of life--a double movement "of estrangement from the Primal Source" which sustains the universe in a process of becoming, and "of turning toward the Primal Source" which releases the universe in being.[106] It is an alternating movement of wider and wider dimensions. At every age, fate becomes increasingly oppressive and the turn more shattering. So with each age, unity becomes ever nearer. "History is a mysterious approach. Every spiral of its way leads us both into profounder perversion and more fundamental turning."[107]

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[104] IW, 17.

[105] M. Friedman, "Translators's Introduction," Daniel, 37.

[106] IT, 101.

[107] IT, 120.

It is a becoming new that starts down at the very roots and branches out into all of existence.[108]

What shall be the resolution of this convulsive alternation--this embrace of opposites? Buber feels that a third thing exists that overarches this opposition and, in fact, overcomes it. "We can only hint at this third that can liberate us from the two; it is not yet graspable even in the form of a provisionable image."[109] While logical conceptions insist that only one of the two contradictories can be true, in the life-experience they are inseparable. "The person who has acted knows that he was and is in the hands of God. The unity of the contraries is the mystery at the inner most core of the dialogue."[110]

The Present Moment

> A drop of Messianic consummation must be mingled with every hour; otherwise the hour is godless, despite all piety and devoutness.[111]

Messianism is the idea of an absolute future that transcends all reality of the past or present as the true and perfect life.[112] Yet every realized moment guarantees its coming. In this, Buber is careful not to portray the world as moving in a blind evolutionary process toward this unity; man retains a responsibility and a voice in its outcome.

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[108] OJ, 35.

[109] "On the Psychologizing of the World," ABH, 145.

[110] IW, 109.

[111] PW, 209.

[112] OJ, 50.

Fate is the term used to express this concept of a process of blind and inevitable evolution. "The dogma of gradual process is the abdication of man before the exuberant world of It."[113] Fate suppresses the presence of freedom and the revolution of turning. "The only thing that can become fate for a man is belief in fate; for this suppresses the movement of turning."[114]

Rather, it is destiny, man's savoring his freedom and responsibility, that leads him to embrace the duality of life, thus resolving the world toward its unity. "It does not keep him in leading-strings, it awaits him, he must go to it, yet does not know where it is to be found. But he knows that he must go out with his whole being."[115]

All the hours of history culminate in the historical decision. God addresses each of us; each of us answers by our actions or our failure to act. "This dialogue between God and man, God and world, is the historical hour."[116]

> This means that man is placed in freedom and that every hour in which he, in his current situation, feels himself to be addressed is an hour of genuine decision. In the first instance, of course, he decides only upon his own behavior, but by doing so he participates in a measure that he is neither able nor authorized to determine, in the decision upon what the next hour will be like, and through this, upon what the future generally will be like.[117]

We do not know the future moment--the next step; we do not know what our role is to be. But we do know that "the world is not divine sport but is divine destiny." There is a meaning and a movement in the world toward unity and wholeness. We know that we have a part in creation, that we are the helpers and companions of the Creator.[118]

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[113] IT, 57. [114] Ibid. [115] IT, 59.

[116] ABH, 177. [117] PW, 219.

> You need God in order to be--and God needs you, for the very meaning of your life.[119]

Buber rejects his earlier idea in Daniel that establishes unity in the present. Nevertheless, a hint of unity--a realization of some of the real world--takes place at each moment of man's life. Each moment in which man enters reality with powerful direction and embraces it with the wholeness of his being, is creative. He knows that this appears to be an endless task, and that "there is no 'once-and-for-all' that is of value."[120] He knows that his efforts must ever again miscarry.[121] But he also knows that a drop of Messianic consummation must be mingled with every hour,[122] and that "he who plants the first tree is he who expects the Messiah."[123]

Summary

In searching for an answer to the question: What does "world" mean to Martin Buber, we followed the development of his thought through his Philosophy of Realization, his Dialogical Philosophy and his Anthropological Philosophy. Particular points of importance were individually studied with the added light of his Philosophy of Judaism and other related writings. In brief outline, his concept of world unfolds as follows:

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[118] IT, 82.

[119] Ibid.

[120] D, 98.

[121] ABH, 151.

[122] PW, 209.

[123] KM, 62.

[illegible] Rejecting the pre-Kantian idealism that accepts the objective world as it seems to be, he distinguishes between the world of appearances, with its forms and categories of time, place, and causality, and the inexpressible world of reality that lies beyond. The first has been developed by man out of his life-experience with the second, to give continuum to his experience and stability to himself.

2. The question of knowing moves from an epistemological sense to an ontological one. One comes to know the real world through genuine meeting. This meeting is subject to subject, not only between man and man, and man and God, but even, in a diminished sense, between man and lower nature.

3. Such meetings are creative both for the I and the "over-against." The potentiality of the "in-born thou" is actualized (or realized) and the potentiality of the "over-against" is confirmed or actualized. Real meeting "realizes" the world of reality.

4. Although in fundamental response to the Eternal Thou, the realization of the world is man's vocation. Because of his weakness, the process alternates: first he orientates himself to past experience; then he moves out into the absolute presentness of life-experience; then he returns and reorientates himself.

5. This cyclic process is not smooth but convulsive. The orientating period will grow and become oppressive, stifling the movement of realization. Under the ever-present address of

the Eternal Thou, and at a point when the oppression of It is unendurable, man "turns," and in a revolution of his whole being, goes out once [illegible] realization. Alienation resumes.

6. The expansion of the cycle continues to increase. The extremity of the domination of It reaches more critical levels; the violence and depth of "turning" sends man further into realization.

7. The end result of this world-process is not the destruction but the redemption of It into a total realization of the world of reality--a point of unity and wholeness. Man's potentiality will be fully realized; he will be a unified person. His "image" of the world and the real world will coincide. The "inexpressible" world will be embraced.

CHAPTER IV

HASIDISM

Introduction

"Without some acquaintance with the Hasidic movement," states Ronald G. Smith, "no full understanding of Buber is possible."[1] Yet some of his critics contend that the Hasidism of Martin Buber differs substantially from the actual historic reality. Chapter five will consider the objections of these critics; the present chapter outlines an objective view of Hasidism.[2] This study will be divided into three parts: a political study of the origins of the Hasidic phenomenon, an historic review of its developments, and a religious review of its teachings.[3]

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[1] R. Smith, Martin Buber, 12.

[2] To present such an objective picture, all Buber's sources will be avoided, except as he is referred to by other authors.

[3] J. Oesterreicher agrees with Buber in saying the Hasidic phenomenon cannot be totally explained by any of these studies. "This is not to say that the social, political, or even intellectual and religious conditions of those days account for its birth, but they do explain the eagerness with which so many Jews received its message, as well as the fierceness with which others resisted it" (J. Oesterreicher, "The Hasidic Movement," The Bridge, 3 [1958], 127). He quotes Buber as saying: "Economic development is a fertilizer, no more; the seminal powers are of the spirit alone" (M. Buber, Hasidism, 36).

A. The Political Origins of Hasidism

Birth Pangs of the Messiah

The classical historian of Hasidism, the Russian Jew, Simon Dubnow, estimated the movement as:

> . . . among the most momentous spiritual revolutions that have influenced the social life of the Jews, particularly those of eastern Europe.[4]

After the Black Death of the fourteenth century, the Jews were increasingly persecuted, especially in Germany, and were forced into an eastward migration. They were welcomed by Casmir the Great of Poland who hoped, through their presence, to stimulate the economic life of his country. Life in Poland was not without an occasional persecution, but by comparison with other countries, it seemed like a haven to those dispossessed. From 1500 to 1650, the Jewish population of Poland increased from 50,000 to 500,000.

> From the beginning of the 16th century, the overwhelming mass of Ashkenazic Jewry--the remnants of the communities of medieval England, France and Germany, with others from further afield--became concentrated in Poland and the surrounding Slavonic territories. It is from there that the majority of the Jews in the world today are descended.[5]

The newly settled communities enjoyed a remarkable degree of self-government, both political and economic. A council of elders governed each community or "Kahal" in civil and criminal matters, as did the Rabbis in religious matters. Together they provided welfare and education, levied taxes and even punished criminals. In each province, these local Kahals were grouped into a Synod; the entire nation was governed by the Central Synod.[6]

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[4] S. Dubnow, "Hasidism," The Jewish Encyclopedia, 6.251. Cf. Geschichte des Chassidismus, 2 v., Berlin, 1931, and Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes, 7 v., Berlin, 1929.

[5] C. Roth, History of the Jews, 268-9.

This economic "advantage" of the Polish Jews worked toward their undoing. The wealthy landowners of Poland were native Catholics. The serfs, or tenant farmers, were the Ukrainian Orthodox. As in similar social arrangements, the serfs returned a high percentage of their products to the landowners. They were poor, illiterate, and permanently dependent on the landowners. The situation developed one step further when the landowners turned over the entire management of their property to the new Jewish middle class, freeing themselves for travel and life in their own style.

The Jewish tenants managed farms, mills, pastures, dairies, bridges, distilleries, fishing rights, tax collections, and even whole towns. They collected a tax on every birth and every marriage. Not only were they hated as representatives of the Polish exploiters, but were more intensely hated for their own additional exploitation. They lived on an erupting volcano.[7]

The eruption occurred in the first half of the seventeenth century. To defend themselves against the border raids of the Tartars, the Ukrainians were allowed to form a national guard called the Cossacks. Through successful combat, the Cossacks sensed their own power, turned, and in 1630, led a small peasant insurrection against the landowners. The will to revolt grew steadily and in 1648, under the leadership of Bogdon Chmielnicki, the Cossacks declared a "holy war" against the Polish exploiters and "the cursed breed of Jews."[8]

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[6] J. Oesterreicher, op. cit., 127. [7] Ibid., 128.

Although a peace treaty was agreed upon between Casmir V and Chmielnicki in that same year, it was no more effective than the later treaties of 1649 and 1651.

> Throughout the country, massacres took place on a scale and of a ferocity which beggared anything which had been known in Europe since the time of the Black Death.[9]

The Cossacks found an ally in the Russian Czar, and in 1654, extended their revolution to White Russia and Lithuania. As one city after another capitulated, the Jewish inhabitants were either expelled or executed.[10] It is reported that between 1648 and 1658, 100,000 Jewish lives were lost;[11] less than one in ten survived in the heavily Jewish-populated provinces of Volhynia and Podolia.[12]

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[8] H. Graetz, History of the Jews, 5.7.

[9] C. Roth, op. cit., 305.

[10] Originally, the persecuted Jews were befriended by the Poles. But when the Jews sided with the invading Swedes in 1655 against the Poles, they earned the hatred of their former allies as well.

[11] C. Roth, op. cit., 305.

[12] J. Oesterreicher, op. cit., 130. Dubnow ("Hasidism," The Jewish Encyclopedia, 6.253) makes the important distinction between the Jews of the largely urban, northwestern provinces of Poland, Lithuania, and White Russia, and those of the rural southwest, especially Volhynia, Podolia, and Galicia. In the first

> Not since the downfall of its kingdom has Israel seen such calamity. These are the heralds of the approaching Messiah; at the brink of our graves they announce our redemption.[13]

The Jews, a people constantly visited by persecution, developed a tradition that said the Messiah would come at the drakest hour of the night, just before the dawn. The horror of these years fanned this latent messianism into an obsession so intense it repeatedly created the personality it so desperately desired.

Pseudo-Messiah

As Poland became the refuge of the northern European Jews, so Turkey became the refuge of the Spanish and southern French Jews. Here, in the community of Smyrna in 1626, was born Sabbatai Zevi. Intensely educated in the Talmud and Kabbalah, this man, blessed with intelligence and a warm, confident personality, perceived that he had been specially called as Messiah. The calamities of Poland deeply moved him and he "promised to act and thus change Israel's lot."[15]

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group, the Jews are a smaller minority, sensitive to the attitude of the Gentiles, well educated and sophisticated. The second group, ignorant and more emotional, was larger and kept to themselves. The persecutions struck the second group more forcibly, fostering an intense messianic spirit and giving birth to both Jacob Frank and Israel ben Eliezer. On the other hand, it was in the first area that Hasidism was accepted, only after being "intellectualized," and even then, as a tolerated and distinct sect with heavy opposition from the Mitnagdim. Dubnow's important geographical observation weaves itself all through the history of Hasidism.

[13] S. Dubnow, Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes, 7.41. Dubnow is quoting from the letter of an Italian Rabbi. Translation found in J. Oesterreicher, op. cit., 130.

[14] C. Roth, op. cit., 311.

[15] J. Oesterreicher, op. cit., 131.

On New Year's Day, 1665, he proclaimed himself Messiah and was unquestioningly accepted by Jews from all over the world, as evidenced by letters of jubilation from the Jews of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Roth reports that:

> . . . the merchant princes of the community of Amsterdam . . . prepared a petition to forward to the Pretender, assuring him of their implicit faith in his mission.[16]

The Jewish community began an intensive fast to purify themselves for the imminent redemption. When the ritual was satisfied, they moved on into great celebrations and festivities. Time grew heavy for the new, self-styled Messiah. He realized that some action had to be taken.

An anonymous "prophet" had written that:

> . . . Sabbatai would take the crown from the Sultan's head, put it on his own, and make the Sultan follow him like a slave.[17]

Whether by pressure from the people or by reason of his own illusion, Sabbatai decided to fulfill the prophesy by setting out for Constantinople in 1666. However, some Jews in Turkey became fearful of an insurrection and reprisal, and informed the Sultan of his coming. On his arrival, Sabbatai was immediately arrested and imprisoned by the Grand Vizier. During his stay of several weeks in prison, his followers showered him with care. On September 14, 1666, Mohammed IV summoned Sabbatai and gave him the choice of apostasy or death. He unhesitatingly chose apostasy, embraced Islamism, and left the Sultan's presence, a royal pensioner. This tragedy has since been referred to as the "black and fateful day in the history of Judaism."

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[16] C. Roth, op. cit., 311.

[17] J. Oesterreicher, op. cit., 132.

Gershom Scholem presents a more sobering estimate of Sabbatai. Examining his writings and the notations by his contemporaries, Scholem observes a manic-depressive psychotic who, in his euphoric state, exhibits a magnetic personality with a messianic illusion, utterly convinced and convincing in the matter of his new identity. Once in a state of depression, he visited a Nathan of Gaza "in order to find peace of soul . . . as a patient [going] to a doctor of the soul."[18] Nathan took his messianic claim seriously and became his tireless prophet, giving Sabbatai's illusion both theological depth and literary style. "He was at once the John the Baptist and the Paul of the new messiah."[19]

Even after Sabbatai's apostasy, his followers refused to accept the fact--so much did their psychological survival depend upon a belief in the arrival of a Messiah![20]

Almost a century later, a Podolian adventurer known as Jacob Frank presented himself as the reincarnation of Sabbatai, and immediately received thousands of followers. He offered them a mixture of fanatical antinomianism and sin mysticism. As he declared:

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[18] G. Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, 295.

[19] Ibid.

[20] S. Dubnow, Geschichte des Chassidismus, 1.44.

> I have come to free the world from all laws and statutes now in force. I must destroy the whole of them, then the Good God will reveal Himself.[21]

He rejected the Talmud and rigid Rabbinical Law and called his followers "Zoharists," followers of the teachings of the Kabbalah. He held that man had to pass through the gates of fornication in order to enter the halls of holiness. It was the application of this last principle, accompanied by rather flagrant revels and orgies, that earned his sect an excommunication by the Rabbis.

It would seem that Frank took advantage of the anti-Semitism of the Church; at any rate he escaped civil punishment by being baptized into the Catholic Church, along with all his followers. But when he refused to give up his Messiahship, the Church had the government imprison him. He attempted to escape punishment again by joining the Orthodox Church, but finally accepted exile to Germany and died there, the self-styled "Duke of Offenbach."[22]

There were many others who, in a less dramatic way, sought to hasten the coming of the Messiah. Influenced by the teachings of the practical Kabbalah, they took on severe penances and mortifications, hoping to "defeat that multitude of evil spirits which, in their opinion, guarded the Messiah and prevented his coming."[23]

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[21] S. Dubnow, Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes, 7.209. Translation found in J. Oesterreicher, op. cit., 133.

[22] J. Oesterreicher, op. cit., 133. [23] Ibid., 134.

The fear and insecurity of the common people projected itself into a strong belief in demons, evil spirits and apparitions. They received scarce help or understanding from their Rabbis who immersed themselves in highly esoteric and irrelevant studies of the Torah. So it was that the people, in such deep spiritual need, turned to faith healers and holders of the secret mysteries of the Kabbalah.

> Small wonder then, that the people turned to men who, because of their knowledge of the Kabbalah and its alledged mystical secrets, were believed able to cast out evil spirits. They wandered through all the cities and villages where Jews lived to cure the sick of body and of soul by exorcism, magic incantations, amulets or medicine. To perform their "cures" they would wear white robes, put on the prayer shawl and the phylacteries, use black candles, the ram's horn, or other sacred objects.
>
> They would, above all, shift and shuffle the letters of the name Yahweh--to Jews the ineffable name of God--which supposedly gave them power over the world of demons and earned them the title Baale Shem, Masters of the Name. Their influence was considerable; no doubt, they often brought comfort to the harrassed, but at the same time deepened their bewilderment.[24]

The earliest recording of a Baal Shem is Elia of Chelm, a holy man of Germany who lived in the sixteenth century. But "due largely to the psychological reasons, most of these emerged and exercised their influence in east Europe--Poland, Volynia, Podolia."[25]

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[24] Ibid., 136.

[25] E. Müller, History of Jewish Mysticism, 137.

B. Historic Development of Hasidism

Israel ben Eliezer

Into this situation of unusual spiritual and personal need was planted the seed of Hasidism. Although the exact time and place is not certain, Israel ben Eliezer, founder of Hasidism, was born about 1700, probably in Okup, Podolia, near the Polish-Turkish border of that time.[26] In the eternal style of hagiographers, he is described as "a man of striking magnetism, intense religious fervor, and sage human insight."[27]

He lost his parents while still a small boy, but was cared for and educated by the community. The village school which he attended, called a "cheder," was quite poor even by seventeenth-century standards; it was a small, dimly lighted and poorly ventilated room. Children were taught by rote memorization of adult material and motivated by a despotic teacher's whip. It is little wonder that Israel would sneak off to the forest and enjoy the quiet of the birds and trees.[28]

When he was twelve, Israel earned his livelihood working at school as a teacher's helper and led the children to and from school each day. He developed a way with children, communicating to them an enthusiasm for this rather painful program.

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[26] S. Dubnow, Geschichte des Chassidismus, 78.

[27] L. Newman, The Hasidic Anthology, xiii.

[28] J. Oesterreicher, op. cit., 137.

He was next employed as "porter" in the local synagogue, a situation that gave him access to the synagogue library and the learning of the talmudic and kabbalic writings.[29]

At twenty, Israel became a schoolmaster himself. In this new position of leadership, he frequently arbitrated the domestic conflicts of the townspeople, listening and offering advice. At one such session, he impressed the father of the famous Rabbi of Brody, Abraham Gerschon Kutower. When the father offered him the hand of his daughter, Israel accepted. However, shortly afterwards the father died and the Rabbi, considering the contract a family disgrace, was most reluctant to honor his father's will. But the daughter insisted, and the marriage took place. Israel and bride departed for the Carpathian Mountains, where he studied and meditated for several years. When his spiritual preparation was completed, he settled in Tluste and began his career as a Baal Shem. Israel traveled extensively in that region while his wife managed a tavern.[30]

Ben Eliezer impressed the rural Jews by his unusual kindness and warmth of heart. He prayed with such an inner fire, Dubnow notes, that his heart inflamed all those about him.[31] He thus came to be called the Good Baal Shem--Baal Shem Tov, commonly abbreviated "Besht."

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[29] S. Dubnow, Geschichte des Chassidismus, 80. In reaction to the Sabbatais and Franks, the rabbis forbade the Kabbalah to be taught to more than one student: a restriction to subdue its popularity. Therefore, to Israel, it had the aura of "forbidden lore." Cf. M. Diamond, Martin Buber, 116.

[30] S. Dubnow, ibid., 84. [31] Ibid., 87.

Sometime between 1740 and 1745, he moved to Miedzyboz in Podolia, "which remained the capital of the Hasidic movement until his death," about 1760.[32]

The popular teaching of the Besht did not consist in dogmatic or ritual reforms, "but in a deeper, psychological one. Its aim was to change, not the belief, but the believer."[33] The Besht taught all to live their belief outwardly, stressing the joy of life and love of neighbor in distinction to the gloom and dry formalism of the rabbis. All his teachings were oral[34] and were communicated by his personality rather than by extensive, esoteric doctrine. This simple, democratic life of the spirit was a welcome relief, to common man and scholar alike.[35] His followers became noted for their obvious awareness of God and their joy in His presence; hence they were called "Hasids," pious ones.[36]

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[32] J. Oesterreicher, op. cit., 139.

[33] S. Dubnow, The Jewish Encyclopedia, 6.252. For a more complete description of the nature of these materials, see Chapter 5, 128-31.

[34] A study of Hasidism must distinguish between theoretical writings, collections of sermons and tracts written by later hasids, and the legendary materials, set down after the theoretical, but recording an oral tradition that finds its source with the Besht himself.

"To understand the manner in which the Besht transmitted his teachings, it is necessary to describe the procedure by which the oral traditions of Hasidism came into being. The Besht's pupils listened to him in conversations; in public addresses; in the discourses on the occasions of the third Sabbath Meal; in the synagogue when he expounded portions of the Torah.

"Sometimes his disciples made annotations directly from his spoken words; sometimes these notes were on the basis of hearsay and reports of other persons who had been present, or who had received an account of the Besht's utterances second-hand; sometimes an imaginative record of his sayings would be written down. These recordings are incomplete and frequently incorrect.

"It is not surprising to read that the Besht once exclaimed, at the sight of a written record of his oral teaching: 'I have not spoken a single word of this'" (S. Spiegel, Hebrew Reborn, 1.153).

Hasidism spread rapidly in the southern, rural provinces of Poland. In the north, it spread slowly and always remained a distinct minor sect beside the Orthodox Judaism. Its teachings were neither soundly orthodox nor sufficiently reserved and sophisticated for these northern urbanites.[37] Some of this resistance was overcome by the successor to the Besht, the Reb Dov Baer of Mitzeritz ("Great Maggid" or great preacher) who adapted Israel's teachings to the taste of this more scholarly element.[38] He assumed a "primus inter pares" leadership of the Hasidic movement until his death in 1772.[39] Most of the renowned figures of Hasidism were either disciples of the Baal Shem or the Great Maggid, or of one of their descendants.[40]

Hasidism not only allowed, but stressed individuality among its members. The stability of this movement necessarily centered on the strength of the personality of its leader--the "Zaddik"--rather than on an organized system. Without a singular, dynamic leader, the movement would decentralize and fragment.

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[35] I. Rubin, "Chassidic Community Behavior," Anthropological Quarterly, 37 (1964), 139.

[36] E. Müller, op. cit., 139.

[37] S. Dubnow, The Jewish Encyclopedia, 6.253.

[38] C. Roth, op. cit., 314.

[39] I. Rubin, op. cit., 142.

[40] E. Müller, op. cit., 139.

With the death of the Dov Baer, this is exactly what happened.

Hasidic Religious Life

The religious life of the Hasidim had three unique characteristics: the leader, or Zaddik; his relation with the community; and the ritual celebration, the Meal.

As mentioned, Hasidism was centered around the personality of the Zaddik. Sometimes called the Rebbe, he was both a saint who had gone up to the mountain top, dwelling in the solitude and holiness of God, and a man of the people, "transforming his mysticism into ethos and bringing it to the community in the valley below."[41] The Zaddik was the strength and the downfall of Hasidism; the reason for the movement's fantastic spread during its first fifty years and the later cause of its degeneration into superstition and magic.[42] But if decay eventually occurred, it could never outweigh the creative force of the earlier period.

> There are two things about the movement which are particularly remarkable. One is the fact that within a geographically small area and also within a surprisingly short period, the ghetto gave birth to a whole galaxy of saint-mystics, each of them a startling individual. The incredible intensity of creative religious feeling, which manifested itself in Hasidism between 1750 and 1800, produced a wealth of truly original religious types which, as far as one can judge, surpassed even the harvest of the classical period of Safed. Something like a rebellion of religious energy against petrified religious values must have taken place.[43]

The Zaddik's personality created community. This too was unique. Neither legally established nor geographically localized, the Hasidic community embraced people of many different backgrounds and interests--political, educational, economic, geographic. Each was freely drawn by the Zaddik and each freely interrelated with the others in a common communal good. The character of the community relationship was informal and expressive rather than formal and instrumental.[44]

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[41] G. Scholem, op. cit., 342.

[42] Ibid., 336.

[43] Ibid., 338.

The particularly Hasidic religious celebration occurred at the "Third Meal," the final meal of the Sabbath day.

> Hasidic accent on joy, brotherly love, and communal worship made delight in God a corporate experience. Together, the Hasidim sought to move closer to God. The Zaddik's table was regarded as an altar which one approached with awe.[45]

Family and close followers sat at the dinner table; all others stood around the walls of the room in enraptured silence while the family ate the meal and shared the cup. Then the Rebbe told the Torah, i.e., presented his Talmudic and Hasidic teaching in anecdotes, legends, and oral sayings of the Hasidic past. As the Zaddik unfolded his faith, a realization and embodiment of the Hasidic joy made itself felt in the community and all began to sing and dance in expression of this joy. Here the communal celebration reached its peak. Its realization was achieved in a twofold manner: through the charismatic understandings of the Zaddik and through the conscious expression of joy in the response of the community.[46]

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[44] I. Rubin, op. cit., 142.

[45] J. Oesterreicher, The New Catholic Encyclopedia, 6.947.

[46] I. Rubin, op. cit., 143.

> Their song and dance was not an amusing pastime but an essential part of their sabbath and Holy Day celebrations, an expression of their brotherly affection and their craving for God.[47]

The effect of all this is well described by Rubin:

> Anxiety and problems are discussed and relieved, faith is renewed, the hasidic [man] can again face the prosaic world--he is not alone--he has the community and especially the fatherly eye of the zaddik giving him strength. He can somehow pull through because of this experience of fellowship and stability.[48]

Conflict and Decline

Even though the numbers of Hasidic followers continued to increase after the turn of the nineteenth century, eventually embracing over half of all east European Jews,[49] the genius of Hasidism declined with the passing of the Besht and Great Maggid.[50] And although, as with all great religious movements, the message of the founder was seen as a message of life and unity to its members, "it became a torrent that split the Jewish Community of eastern Europe into two hostile camps."[51]

The thriving Jewish center of the northwest was Vilna, referred to today as "the Jerusalem of Lithuania."[52] The city's famous Rabbi, Elijah ben Solomon, surnamed "Gaon of Vilna" for his outstanding reputation in Talmudic scholarship, viewed the movement with alarm and championed an opposition, called the "Mitnaggedim." His criticism centered on the modified ritual, an improper use of liquor at the Hasidic celebrations, an emphasis on faith over knowledge of Torah, a close similarity with the condemned teachings of Sabbatai and Frank, and the local competition between Zaddik and Rabbi.[53] However, Oesterreicher and Dubnow agree that at the heart of this opposition lay the age-old conflict of supremacy of law versus supremacy of spirit. This is not a question of one excluding the other, but only of which shall lead and which serve.[54]

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[47] J. Oesterreicher, The New Catholic Encyclopedia, 6.947.

[48] I. Rubin. op. cit., 144.

[49] S. Dubnow, The Jewish Encyclopedia, 6.254.

[50] This is Dubnow's opinion. For a different point of view, see I. Rubin, op. cit., 146.

[51] J. Oesterreicher, "The Hasidic Movement," The Bridge, 3.171.

[52] D. Bridger (ed.), The New Jewish Encyclopedia, 505.

In 1771 Vilna experienced an epidemic which took the "lives of several hundred children."[55] This intelligent and sophisticated group of Jews searched for some reason to explain this tragedy and, at their Council in 1772, decreed it to be an expression of God's anger toward the Hasidim. Hasidic leaders were imprisoned and its followers given the terrible "cherem," or excommunication. Letters were sent throughout Poland calling for a "war on this godless sect." In some places, public book burnings and persecutions followed.

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[53] S. Dubnow, "Hasidism," The Jewish Encyclopedia, 6.253.

[54] J. Oesterreicher, "The Hasidic Movement," The Bridge, 3.174. S. Dubnow, "Hasidism," The Jewish Encyclopedia, 6.251.

[55] J. Oesterreicher, The Bridge, 3.1721.

The conflict simmered down until 1780 when the first Hasidic polemicist, Jacob Joseph Cohen of Polna, attacked the "talmudic corruption" of the Rabbis. The Vilna Gaon retaliated at another Council in Zelva, by declaring the Besht "an empty well" and his followers "thorns and thistles to be rooted out" and "impure men who deserted the way of God."[56]

Again, appeal was made to the Russian Government for arrests; books were burned and the "cherem" was enforced more severely. The Hasidim were cut off from business and personal association.[57]

An interesting and unfortunate personality found himself caught between these two uncompromising camps. Schnuer Zalman, called the Rav of Ladi, was first a disciple of Dov Baer and then later a disciple of the Vilna Gaon. Schooled in both teachings, he proposed a compromise called "Hadab," an intellectualized Hasidism named for the first initials of the words: wisdom, knowledge, understanding. While Zalman had hoped to bridge the gap between the two groups and bring peace, he alienated most Hasids and enraged the Vilna Gaon. At the instigation of the Gaon, the Russian Government imprisoned him. However, in 1801, Alexander I of Russia reviewed Zalman's case and the new sect of Hasidism and granted its followers "full religious freedom."[58]

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[56] J. Oesterreicher, The New Catholic Encyclopedia, 6.942.

[57] E. Müller, op. cit., 146.

[58] J. Oesterreicher, The New Catholic Encyclopedia, 6.947.

Just prior to this, two final outbreaks occurred, each caused by a lack of prudence on the part of the Hasidim. In 1796, they circulated a report that the Gaon no longer opposed them, a move that inevitably brought reaction. A year later, the death of the Vilna Gaon was greeted with public jubilation. The Hasidic leaders were denounced to the Russian government by the Mitnagdim as "dangerous agitators and teachers of heresy." Twenty-two of them were arrested, but were later released.[59]

> For decades the feud went on; finally the two camps rested their arms when a new enemy appeared on the side: Haskalah, the Jewish enlightenment.[60]

The Haskalah arose in Germany in the mid-eighteenth century under the leadership of Moses Mendelssohn. Its proponents, called Maskilim, saw the plight of the eighteenth-century Jew and wished to be emancipated by moving into equal citizenship with the contemporary world. This meant modernization of education, dress, customs, and the adoption of the language of their home nation. In other words, they sought "to free the Jews from the shackles of ghetto life."[61] The ironic result was, that while many Jews went so far as to throw off all Jewish practices and identity, they were still marked for persecution in time of crisis. "Consequently, many Jewish leaders came to believe that the only solution to the Jewish problem was the establishment of a Jewish national home," Zionism.[62]

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[59] S. Dubnow, The Jewish Encyclopedia, 6.254.

[60] J. Oesterreicher, The Bridge, 3.174.

[61] D. Bridge (ed.), op. cit., 192.

The Enlightenment was neither loved by the Orthodox, who fought to retain every mark of separate identity, nor the Hasidim, who were condemned by the followers of the Enlightenment for their ignorance, emotionalism and superstition. Although the Enlightenment first attacked Hasidism through pamphlets and verbal criticism, their heaviest inroads were made through the education of the youth.[63]

Hasidism to the Present Day

From the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, Hasidism has declined in numbers and spirit until it now embraces only a few thousands. Ironically, "once persecuted for its heresies by orthodox rabbis, [it] now represents the most conservative and unbending element in Jewish orthodoxy."[64]

The largest contributing factor in this decline was, as termed by Dubnow, "Zaddikism." The Zaddiks perpetuated themselves into a dynastic cult--extending from father to son--to the eighth and even the tenth generation. Even in the time of the Baal Shem, there was an element of superstition and magic in Hasidism. While this gnostic characteristic was originally interpreted metaphorically, a gradual return to its literal meaning took place. The

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[62] Ibid., 193.

[63] S. Dubnow, The Jewish Encyclopedia, 6.255.

[64] H. Weiner, "A Wedding in B'Nai Bruk," Commentary, 40 (1965), 45.

Zaddiks began to exploit their congregations through "pidyon" or redemption money offered to them for prayers and cures. They withdrew from the lives of the people and became princes [illegible] held court. One even maintained a court jester.[65]

The unimaginable extermination of six million Jews by Adolph Hitler has almost totally eliminated the Hasidic movement. The persecution centered on the Polish ghettos, the heartland of Hasidism, and after destroying most, sent remnants to the four corners of the earth.

Today, these Hasidic communities survive in the United States, Israel, Latin America, and western Europe. The Ludovitcher movement in Brooklyn follows a Rebbe who is a seventh-generation descendant of Schnuer Zalman of Ladi, the reconciler mentioned above.[66] The Jerusalem movement descends from the

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[65] Israel of Rishin is of interest since it was in his community in Sadagora that Buber first met Hasidism. Scholem bluntly describes Israel: "Israel of Rishin . . . is to put it bluntly, nothing but another Jacob Frank who has achieved the miracle of remaining an orthodox Jew" (G. Scholem, op. cit., 337). And Müller: "Because of the princely state he maintained, Israel of Rishin became suspect of the Russian Government, and when two Jewish informers were killed, he was kept for a long time in prison. In 1840, in order to escape persecution, he removed to Austria, finally settling in Sadagora in Bukovinia" (E. Müller, op. cit., 151, footnote 9). See also S. Dubnow, The Jewish Encyclopedia, 6.254.

Note also how all these currents of Jewish history meet in the life of Buber. His grandfather was a leading exponent of the Haskalah, yet also introduced Buber to the Hasidim of Sadagora. It was at about this time that one of the two sons of this Zaddik of Sadagora crossed over and himself joined the Maskilim (E. Müller, op. cit., 148).

[66] H. Weiner, "The Lubovitcher Movement," Commentary, 23 (1957), 231.

Besht himself, but has had no Rebbe since the death of the famous great-grandson of the Besht, Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav.[67] Present-day commentators describe the various survivors of Hasidism with reactions ranging from enthusiasm[68] to revulsion.[69]

C. Religious Teachings of Hasidism

Root Ideas

Maurice Friedman notes that the basic concerns of Hasidism, namely piety, love of God and neighbor, and joy in God's creation, go clearly back to the prophets, the psalms, and the School of Hillel.

> Hasidism was firmly rooted in the Jewish past and was perhaps more truly an expression of that past than any Jewish movement of modern times.[70]

The Book of Maccabees gives the title, "Hasid," to a group of men who led God's people in revolt, and rabbinical literature refers to the "hasidim ha-rishonim," a group of farmer-saints of the third century. Since then, the term has been applied to the ideal Jew, he who goes beyond the study of the Law to live it as well.[71]

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[67] H. Weiner, "The Dead Hasidism," Commentary, 31 (1961), 235.

[68] I. Rubin. op. cit., 138.

[69] H. Weiner, "The Dead Hasidism," Commentary, 31 (1961), 424.

[70] M. Friedman, Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue, 17.

[71] L. Jacobs, "The Concept of the Hasid in the Biblical and Rabbinical Literatures," Journal of Jewish Studies, 8 (1957), 147-8.

The teachings of Hasidism are part of the main current of Jewish spirituality. The source of this current is, of course, the written law (Torah) found in the first five books of the Bible.

Around the Law developed a collection of rabbinical commentaries called Talmud. The more immediate rabbinical opinions (Mishna), are made up of rules of conduct (Halakha), and legends (Haggadah) and applications of the above, as well as conclusions derived from it. Finally come the later rabbinical commentary writings (Gemara).

The current permeates into an area of more immediate concern here, the Jewish mystical traditions (Kabbalah).

> The central concepts of Hasidism derive from and can only be understood in terms of the theoretical Kabbalah of the middle ages and the Lurian Kabbalah of the 16th century Safed.[72]

Theoretical Kabbalah

Mysticism refers to an immediate communion between the individual and God, through and beyond symbolism. It is a "knowing," but an "experimental knowing" that leads to a spiritual union with God. Scholem contends that one religion differs from another in the use of different symbols, but the basic mystical experience will be the same.[73] Jewish mysticism is the Kabbalah; that is, the Kabbalah develops those symbols leading to this mystical union which are specifically Jewish in tradition.

The Kabbalah, it should be noted, refers to a movement rather than merely to a document, and stretches from the first century to the present. It contains over three thousand printed documents, and an even greater number not yet printed.[74]

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[72] M. Friedman, op. cit., 17.

[73] G. Scholem, op. cit., 10.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, these "traditional" writings emerged into a distinct mystical school located in southern France and Spain. The Book of Splendor (*Sefar ha Zohar*) is regarded as the peak of this creative "golden age."[75]

This theoretical Kabbalah presents a teaching that is esoteric, tinged with gnosticism and theosophy. Yet it can also be called humanistic because of its concern with man's world and God's mysterious workings in it. It searches beneath the surface words and events of the Torah for meanings fundamental to all human life. "The purer and more nearly perfect it [mystical knowledge] is, the nearer it is to the original stock of knowledge common to all mankind."[76]

The Kabbalah is preoccupied with creation for "to know the stages of the creation process is also to know the stages of one's own return to the root of all existence."[77] If one seeks redemption and reunion with God, one merely studies the creative process, then reverses its pattern.

The Kabbalic teaching begins with the transcendent God (*En Sof*) in His most transcendent sense, the wholly Other, the

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[74] *Ibid.*, 18.

[75] *Ibid.*, 119, 156.

[76] *Ibid.*, 21.

[77] *Ibid.*, 20.

Root of roots.[78]

The transcendent God sent out ten emanations (Sefiroth).[79] These emanations, as they gradually moved out from God, lost their delicate balance. Judgment, for example, began to outweigh love; then love, when restored, would come to outweigh judgment. This constant readjustment from one side to the other is described as the inhalation and exhalation of God. This lost balance is the basis of evil in the world.

These emanations are the spiritual side of the universe. Without them there would be no creation.

> It grows throughout the whole creation. All created things exist because something of the power of the Sefiroth lives and acts in them.[80]

The extreme point in emanation from God is the Shekinah. This is the community of Israel, the bride of the transcendent Godhead, mother of all living Israelites. It is referred to as "in exile."

The goal of life is reunification (Yihud) of the emanations, particularly the Shekinah, with the Godhead. This unification is the principal work of man. His life effort, to "cleave to God in all things" (devekuth), can be accomplished by an inner intention (kavanah). Man is the co-worker with God in restoring unification.

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[78] Ibid., 209.

[79] Ibid., 214. These emanations are strikingly similar to the attributes of God as discussed in medieval scholasticism.

[80] Ibid., 215.

The following quotation serves as a brief example of the style, format, and context of the Zohar:

> Once as Rabbi Aha and Rabbi Judah were walking along together, Rabbi Judah said: We have learned that the virgin of Israel is blessed sevenfold, yet the Scripture says concerning her, . . . "The virgin of Israel is fallen, she shall no more rise." [Amos 5:2] This latter verse has, indeed, been interpreted by all the Companions to be a message of comfort. But that is not probable; the prophet himself refers to it as a lamentation.
>
> To this answered Rabbi Aha: . . . "The virgin of Israel is fallen, she shall no more rise." See that it is not written, "I shall not raise her any more."
>
> Think of a king who in anger against his queen banished her from his palace for a stated time. That time elapsed, she forthwith returned to the king. Thus did it come to pass several times. Then, however, came a time when she was banished from the palace of the king for a lengthy period. The king said: Now it is not like before, when she returned to me. Now, this time, I shall go, taking all my followers, to seek her out. And when he found her, she was in the dust. Seeing her thus trampled, and yearning anew for her, the king took her by the hand and raised her up, and led her back to the palace, and promised on his oath he would never again send her away.
>
> So with the Community of Israel. . . .
>
> Said Rabbi Judah: You have indeed comforted and contented me, and this is the true conception.[81]

The diagram below shows the interrelated pattern of the ten spheres of divine manifestation in which God emerges from his hidden abode. One emanation leads on to the next (descending lines). The lost balance (evil) constantly seeks to restore itself between opposite emanations (horizontal lines). All in all, these Sefiroth (emanations) make up the spiritual side of the universe. Without them, there would be no creation.

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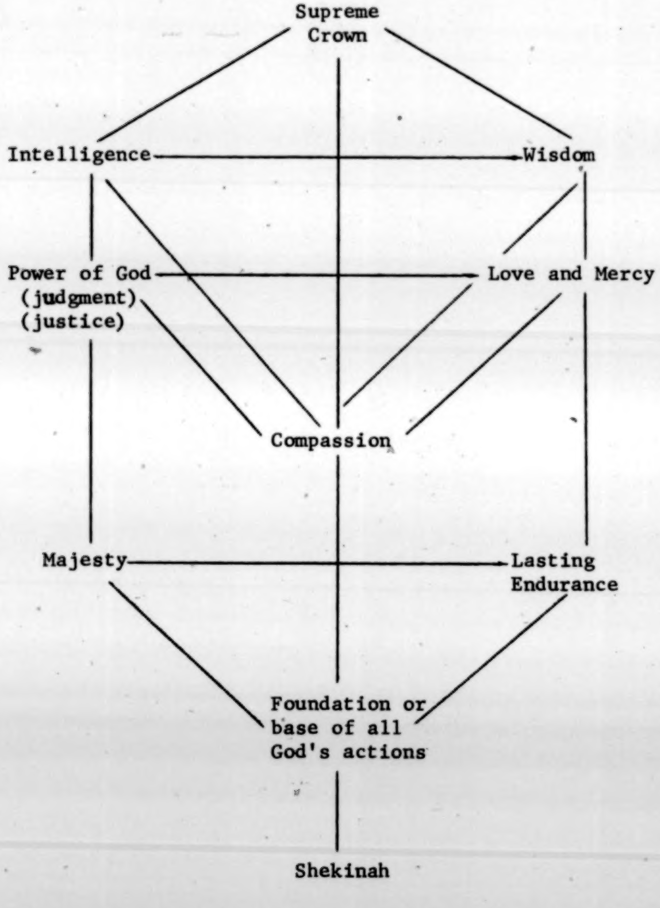
[81] G. Scholem (ed.), Zohar, The Book of Splendor, 109-11.

THE TREE OF GOD

The Divine Emanations according to the traditional Kabbalah


Supreme Crown
Intelligence
Wisdom
Power of God (judgment) (justice)
Love and Mercy
Compassion
Majesty
Lasting Endurance
Foundation or base of all God's actions
Shekinah

Lurian Kabbalah

In sixteenth-century Spain a revival movement of Kabbalic studies emerged in the city of Safed. Isaac Luria Ashkenazi (died 1572), the creative mind of this revival, based his work on the theoretical Kabbalah, but added neo-platonic and gnostic elements. The result was a more complex, theistic teaching.[82]

In general, Luria developed a mystical interpretation of the exile and redemption symbols of the Torah.[83] The messianic emphasis which resulted became immediately popular, given the spirit of the times which yearned for deliverance from persecution. The Lurian Kabbalah became the religious foundation for Sabbatai's pseudo-messiahship.[84]

In particular the Lurian Kabbalah developed four basic concepts found in its theoretical predecessor. The first is the concept of withdrawal (_Zimzum_). Faced with the contradiction between God's limitlessness and the limiting presence of creation as other-than-God, Luria conceived that God, the Godhead, willfully withdrew within Himself. As He withdrew, he emanated his glory into the created vacuum as the sun emanates light. These emanations formed the basis of creation.

> Every new act of emanation and manifestation is preceded by one of contraction and retroaction. In other

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[82] M. Friedman, _op. cit_., 17.

[83] G. Scholem, _Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism_, 286.

[84] _Ibid_., 327.

> words, the cosmic process becomes twofold. Every stage involves a double strain, . . . but for this perennial tension, this ever repeated effort with which God holds himself back, nothing in the world would exist.[85]

As God withdrew, He emanated His Glory into creation in vessels (kelim), as the theoretical Kabbalah had explained. However, according to Luria, the Glory of God proved too much to be contained, and midway through the emanation process, the vessels burst (sheviroth ha-kelim), the divine sparks poured out and fell down into physical creation where they became surrounded and imprisoned in the dark shells (kelipot) of the material world.

Divine harmony was disrupted; the Shekinah was in exile.[86]

Salvation (tikkun) means nothing but restoration or reintegration of the original whole. It is the unification (yihud) of the theoretical Kabbalah, but with an emphasis on man's responsibility to bring about this restoration.

> Everything that man does, reacts somewhere and somehow on this complicated process of Tikkun. . . . In a sense, therefore, we are not only masters of our own destiny, and in the last resort are ourselves responsible for the continuation of the Galuth (exile), but we also fulfill a mission which reaches far beyond that.[87]

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[85] Ibid., 261. Recalling that redemption is a reversal of the creation process (cf. above, p. 110), the twofold Lurian cosmic process in its contraction/expansion redemptive process has definite similarities to Buber's process of alternation discussed in chapter 3.

[86] Ibid., 265.

[87] Ibid., 274.

Everything, according to Luria, depends on man's inner intention (Kavvanah), the most important of which is prayer. But Luria's doctrine of mystical prayer "stands directly on the borderline between mysticism and magic where the one only too easily passes into the other."[88] The words of the prayer--especially if they are a liturgically fixed text--contain deep wisdom. The mystic seeks to enter into the hidden spirit of the words with intense inner concentration. As he achieves this "intention" (Kavvanah), something of the spark is released from the shell and reunited with the Godhead. It is man's "intention" which makes this possible. It was this element that turned the Lurian Kabbalah into the pejorative "practical" Kabbalah with its many magic prayers and actions that guaranteed healings, etc. Among other applications, it was the basis of the Baal Shem techniques of shuffling the letters of God's name YHWH to cause magical spiritual and material effects.

Hasidic Adaptation

Hasidism is not a distinct departure from the Kabbalah, but an ethic transformation. Scholem writes:

> If you were to ask me: What is this new doctrine of these mystics . . . what were their new principles and ideas: I say I should hardly know what to answer. In the previous lectures, it was always possible to lay down a blueprint, so to speak, of the spiritual architecture of the subject matter and to give a more or less precise definition of its ideational side. In the case of Hasidism, certainly a creative religious movement, we cannot do so without repeating ourselves innumerable times.[89]

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[88] *Ibid.*, 277.

[89] *Ibid.*, 338.

Basically, Hasidism's doctrine is Kabbalism, but significant differences can be observed. For one, the complex system and abstruse vocabulary of the Kabbalah were set aside in the newer religion.[90] Hasidism is a religion for the common man rather than for the occasional "holy man." Its teachings are simple, expressed by parable and through the life of the Zaddik.

"Personality takes the place of doctrine; what is lost in rationality by this change is gained in efficacy."[91] In this regard, Scholem recalls a brief Hasidic tale uniquely illustrative of the point:

> A tale is told of a famous saint who said: "I did not go to the 'Maggid' of Meseritz to learn Torah from him but to watch him tie his shoe-laces."[92]

Unlike the traditional Rabbi, the Zaddik has become Torah. "It is no longer his knowledge but his life which lends a religious value to his personality. He is the living incarnation of the Torah."[93]

Again, Hasidism was not a theory but an inner revival, not an intellectual system but a way of life. The emphasis moved from the theosophic-gnostic element to a psychological-mysticism, concerned with giving man his direction in religious life. Scholem agrees with Buber when he says that Hasidism represents "Kabbalism turned ethos," in the sense that the mystical zaddik "turned to the people with their mystical knowledge, . . . and instead of cherishing as a mystery the most personal of all experiences, undertook to teach its secret to all men of good will."[94] Müller observes the same transformation less sympathetically:

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[90] Ibid., 326.

[91] Ibid., 344.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

> Martin Buber, it is true, underestimates the spiritual achievement of Cabbalism when he sees in Chassidism a "desystemization of the mystery." Still, it is the fact that on the whole it did not reach the spiritual level of the old methods of esoteric inquiry and was indeed almost ignorant of those methods; and it would seem that the outer descent to the masses, while it carried mysticism into the whole of the religious life, was accompanied by an inner descent from the highest spheres of thought into the denser atmosphere of religious emotionalism.[95]

Finally, Hasidism allowed a latitude of belief that made system impossible. This is illustrated by another anecdote:

> When a great Zaddik was asked why he did not follow the example of his teacher in living as he did, he replied: "On the contrary, I do follow his example, for I leave him as he left his teacher."[96]

Each Hasid followed his own inner way, seeking to cleave to God in the peculiar circumstances of his life. There exists within Hasidism wide variances of teaching, bound together in the belief in the "torah of one's heart."[97]

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[94] Ibid., 342.

[95] E. Müller, op. cit., 140-41.

[96] G. Scholem, op. cit., 348.

[97] Weiss presents an interesting study of the polarity between God "out of this world" versus God "in the world" piety in Hasidism. He is amazed that two such fundamental differences could exist in one sect (J. Weiss, "Contemplative Mysticism and Faith in Hasidic Piety," Journal of Jewish Studies, 4 (1953), 19-29).

As Hasidism moved from a literal to a metaphorical interpretation of the Kabbalah, various teachings were given a new appreciation, sometimes quite different from the original.[98]

In the face of the Kabbalah's teaching of the withdrawal of God, Hasidism re-established God's immanence in all things. The world is in the closest possible relation with God. In fact, the world is God's garment, put on so that He might lead men, step by step, to see His presence behind the appearance of external phenomena.[99] The withdrawal became a symbol of our natural inner alienation rather than an occurrence in God; that is, it represented that area within each man which has not yet cleaved to God by kavvanah, and so an area in which God is still hidden, waiting to be reunited.[100]

The concept of kavvanah moves from a quasi-magical intention to the dedication of the whole person, less an effort of the will and more a movement of our whole being.[101] With kavvanah, man comes to see and live with the awareness of God's presence as the basis of all things. So religion and ethics, relation to God and relation to world, become one. According to Hasidism, or at least one school of it, the essential unity of creation precludes an artificial separation of the sacred and profane.[102]

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[98] M. Friedman, op. cit., 20.

[99] M. Friedman, loc. cit.

[100] G. Scholem, op. cit., 348.

[101] E. Müller, op. cit., 114.

[102] A. Cohen, Martin Buber, 18.

Messianism would inevitably become a critical problem to the Hasid, especially if considered in the context of his historic situation. Here, the Zaddiks skillfully moved the emphasis away from the expectation of an immanent eschatological Messiah to a present hope and effort to prepare for the Messiah by immediate, small "redemptions." This shift in emphasis placed the Messiah to the side and moved the immediate situation into the center.

To redeem the sparks and to restore the shekinah to God was the work of each man in the particular situation of his life. Each task was to be done with an inner consciousness of God's presence and with total dedication to the basic effort of restoration. In this way alone would man hasten the coming of the Messiah.[103]

The awareness and experience of God in the world gave the Hasid his major characteristic--joy, a virtue to be cultivated. Its opposite, despair, was worse than sin because "it leads one to believe one's self in the power of sin and hence to give in to it."[104] The Lurian tendency to asceticism and penance for its own sake was rejected. The Hasid sought to find God in the highest expression of joy, even--or especially--the sensual joy of the whole man.

> Characteristic of the Chassidic way of life were also a fondness for external nature and the creation of a special religious-popular music. . . . This music was closely con-

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[103] M. Diamond, Martin Buber, Jewish Existentialist, 119.

[104] M. Friedman, op. cit., 22.

nected with the religious male dance which gave the most marked expression to the ecstatic sense of religious comradeship.[105]

The hasidic emphasis on joy also comes from the knowledge of the presence of God in all things. This joy has a double character. It is at once a joyous affirmation of the external world and a joyous penetration into the hidden world behind the externals. In perfect joy, the body and the soul are at one; this precludes both extreme asceticism and libertinism.[106]

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[105] E. Müller, op. cit., 142.

[106] M. Friedman, op. cit., 21.

CHAPTER V

CRITIQUE OF BUBER'S HASIDIC INTERPRETATION

If within the Christian world there has been a livening of interest in the Hasidic religious experience, Martin Buber is in no small way responsible. It is his presentation, above all others, that has rescued Hasidism from the oblivion of the forgotten past and impressed it firmly upon our present Christian horizon.

Given this impact, and the resonances it generated, the question of whether the Hasidism of Buber is simply "in the eyes of the beholder," or is an objective, historic reality, is perhaps, academic. It is his present vision rather than the past reality that we have responded to.[1]

Nevertheless, there are various advantages to be gained by a study of the controversy over the validity of Buber's interpretation: first, the areas of agreement and the critical areas of conflicting opinion can be delineated; secondly, the nuances of Buber's interpretation can be explored; thirdly, and most important, the methodology and goals of Buber's scholarship can be formulated. In this context of criticism and response by the experts, the reader will find himself in a better position to formulate his own judgments.

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[1] G. Scholem, "Martin Buber's Hasidism: A Critique," Commentary, 32 (1961), 306. Henceforth, this work will be referred to merely as A Critique.

Buber and His Critics

There are many minor critics of Buber's interpretation, including his biographers, Arthur Cohen[2] and Malcolm Diamond;[3] and Hasidic experts: Martinus Beek,[4] Roland Gittelsohn,[5] Rudolf Pannwitz,[6] John Oesterreicher,[7] Ernst Simon,[8] Herbert

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[2] A. Cohen, Martin Buber, London, 1957. Cohen makes the surprising criticism of saying that Hasidism had little time for the "artfully recollected story" Buber emphasizes so much (p. 76, footnote). This not only contradicts the extensive work of Buber, but also of G. Scholem and L. Newman (The Hasidic Anthology, New York, 1963).

[3] M. Diamond, Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist, New York, 1960. Diamond describes Buber's interpretation as "highly selective" and biased against the rabbinical legalism (p. 112, 128).

[4] M. Beek and S. Weiland, Martin Buber, Westminster, 1968. "Largely intuitive," "one-sided picture," "cannot always survive a confrontation with the written sources" (p. 42-3).

[5] R. Gittelsohn, "Hosannas from a Hallowed Few," Saturday Review of Literature, 43 (June 4, '60), 16-17. "Selective," "ignores important material," "totters on brink of obscurantism and superstition."

[6] R. Pannwitz, "Der Chassidmus," Merkur, 8 (1954), 810-30; "Myths, Gnosis, Religion," Merkur, 8 (1954), 1068-71.

[7] J. Oesterreicher, "Bookreview," America, 105 (1961), 94-5; "The Hasidic Movement," The Bridge, 3 (1958), 122-86.

[8] E. Simon, "Martin Buber and the Faith of Israel," Iyyun, Hebrew Philosophical Quarterly, 9 (1958), 23 ff.

Weiner,[9] and J. Weiss.[10] However, the primary discussion took place between Buber and Gershom Scholem, reputed to be the greatest authority on Jewish mysticism, and Scholem's disciple, Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer.[11]

This chapter focuses primarily on this central Buber-Scholem debate and will refer to the considerations of the other authors only when they enlarge the question. Briefly stated, Scholem contends that Buber's interpretation is (1) highly subjective,[12] (2) highly selective,[13] and therefore (3) makes use of Hasidism only as a paradigm of his own existential philosophy.[14]

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[9] H. Weiner, "A Wedding at B'Nai Brak," *Commentary*, 40 (1965), 39-46; "The Dead Hasidism," *Commentary*, 31 (1961), 234-42, 420-27. "No connection between actual Hasidic practice and the Buber version. . . ."

[10] J. Weiss, "Contemplative Mysticism and 'Faith' in Hasidic Piety," *The Journal of Jewish Studies*, 4 (1953), 19-29; "Via Passiva in Early Hasidism," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 11 (1960), 137-55. Weiss notes that two very different schools of thought existed within Hasidism. "No difference more fundamental than that between these two schools of thought can exist within a religious movement." Noteworthy is that Weiss' division of Hasidic thought, made on a different basis, differs from that of Scholem and Buber.

[11] G. Scholem, "Ninth Lecture," *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 325-50; *A Critique*, 305-316; M. Buber, "Interpreting Hasidism," *Commentary*, 36 (1963), 218-25 [henceforth, this article will be referred to merely as *Interpreting Hasidism*]; G. Scholem, "Buber's Hasidism," *Commentary*, 37 (1964), 18-20; R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, "Man's Relation to God and World in Buber's Rendering of the Hasidic Teaching," *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*, LaSalle, 1965, 403-34; M. Buber, "Replies to My Critics," *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*, 731-41 [henceforth, this work will be referred to merely as *Replies to My Critics*].

[12] G. Scholem, *A Critique*, 306, 316.

[13] *Ibid*., 307.

[14] *Ibid*., 307.

> I am convinced that his selection corresponds as far as possible to his own sense of his message. I am not convinced however, that the sense of his message, as he has formulated it in his later writings, is that of Hasidism.

Each of these three points will now be developed at length.

Method of Interpretation

Dr. Scholem's first fundamental objection to Buber's interpretation is that it is clearly not an objective, historic study which adheres to the norms of contemporary scholarship.

> A critical analysis of Buber's interpretation has to confront certain special difficulties at the very outset. The biggest is that Buber, although a keen student of Hasidic literature, does not write as a scholar citing chapter and verse for his contentions. He combines facts and quotations as suits his purpose which is to present Hasidism as a spiritual phenomenon, and not as a historical one. He has frequently said that he is not interested in history, and in the context of our discussions, this means two things, both of equal importance. First, he ignores much material which does not interest him, although it may be of the greatest value. . . . And secondly, the material that he does select is frequently bound up with his own interpretation of its meaning.[16]

Scholem is further disturbed because Buber, a man of searching mind and literary refinement, has overwhelmed the

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[15] G. Scholem, "Buber's Hasidism," op. cit., 19.

[16] A Critique, 306. Buber's critics do not agree on the nature of his subjectivity. Scholem contends that he switched from a clear, mystical interpretation to a distinctively existential position. "Here he forsook the world of mysticism and took a new stand which brought him into the forefront of what today would be called religious existentialism, however much he used to shun the term. But even in this new phase, Hasidism continued to serve as his paradigm" (ibid., 307).

In contrast, Schatz-Uffenheimer describes his subjectivity as that of one lost within himself, having no distinctive position. He "reveals to us the path of a personality full of conflicts of his relationship to the inner meaning of Hasidism" (op. cit., 403).

world with his interpretation.

> Competent scholars [are] somewhat unwilling to raise any fundamental questions about whether everything in this inspired and beautifully worded interpretation might stand the test of sober and critical analysis.[17]

In contrast, Scholem's disciple, Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer, is not disturbed by Buber's unwillingness to make an historical study. She sensed that he "aspired . . . to grasp this phenomenon as a pattern of life complete in itself: an attempt at a life of man with God within the world."[18] But such a "conceptual synthesis," she contends, is not a "system" and cannot use analytic methods. Therefore, she describes his work as a "synthetic tapestry . . . woven of selected strands; it is he who determines the hue of the cloth."[19]

Even if somewhat dubious about Buber's tapestry, this critic does admit that the nature of the Hasidic phenomenon is greater than the sum of its elements. And this is the point: Scholem carefully observes the objective elements of Hasidism, while Buber attempts to communicate to us that "something more." His effort is to restore to us

> a great buried heritage of faith . . . to recapture a sense of the power that once gave it the capacity to take hold of and vitalize the life of diverse classes of people.[20]

Buber would fully agree to most of these comments, yet deny any implication that his work is inferior or invalid.

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[17] Ibid. [18] R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, op. cit., 403.

[19] Ibid., 404.

[20] M. Buber, Interpreting Hasidism, 218.

> I have not aimed at presenting a historical or hermeneutically comprehensive presentation of Hasidism. . . . My task was by its nature a selective one. But . . . the principle of selection that ruled here did not originate in a subjective preference. . . . This attitude of mine includes valuation, of course, from its base up, but this valuation is one . . . which has its origin in the immovable central existence of values. Since I have attained to the maturity of this insight, I have not made use of a filter; I became a filter.[21]

Buber maintains that there are two ways to bring a great religious tradition back to the present. Historical scholarship is the first. Here, the tradition is treated as an object of knowledge and is advanced exactly and comprehensively. The scholar must distinguish between the primary material to be developed fully, and the secondary material to be left in the background. In these decisions, he proceeds along strict principles of historic research.[22]

The second way, which Scholem himself identifies as spiritual scholarship[23] seeks to re-present in our own age the force and vitality of the past religious tradition in such a way that its former life of faith will reinfuse itself into our present generation. This cannot be accomplished merely by re-presenting the body of teaching or forms of institution that formerly embodied this life of faith. Rather the life itself must be renewed and communicated.

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[21] Replies to My Critics, 731.

[22] Interpreting Hasidism, 218.

[23] A Critique, 306. This chapter will involve two sets of terms that overlap and may possibly cause some confusion. Please note them carefully:

Methods of Interpretation
- historical: the objective, "footnote and bibliography" research method.
- spiritual: a "transjective" attempt to recapture the dynamic life-force of a past religious movement.

Dialectic of Hasidism
- spiritual: neo-platonic, gnostic attitude that seeks to remove "world" to attain unity with God.
- realistic: existential attitude that seeks to redeem the "world" following a path of affirmation of the sacred and the secular as one.

Conceptually, Buber divides a religious tradition into life, the force or vitality of its followers, and doctrine, the written teachings, guiding institutions, and other traditional forms that serve as a basis for this religious life. While the traditional form serves as an essential basis of religious life, it never engenders a new life of faith of itself. Rather, personal or communal existence springs forth from within, transforming the traditional form.

> At the time of its birth, as well as in the stages of development that follow, the new faith assimilates itself to an old doctrine, appeals to it, indeed, finds in the doctrine its own origin.[24]

While the original doctrine prevails over the "life" of each generation, new vital experiences of faith must renew the doctrine's power in each succeeding generation.

Buber's goal is to rediscover and revitalize the "life" of Hasidism as it lies hidden in the traditional forms of its surviving doctrine.[25] To accomplish this, it is not necessary to present all the doctrine, but only that selection of it which best embodies the vitalizing elements. "And this . . . requires an act of judgment which rests, not upon the customary objectivity of the scholar, but upon the reliability of the man in the face of his special task."[26]

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[24] Interpreting Hasidism, 219.

[25] A contemporary comparison might clarify the bite of Buber's "life" and "doctrine" dichotomy. This chapter was being developed while Charles Davis and John McKenzie, S.J., debated on the (Catholic) Church in Chicago, June 28, 1968. A

Buber's Hasidic scholarship can be evaluated only through a careful evaluation of the scholar himself. His fundamental task is not to carry over and present objective, factual matter (Hasidic teaching), but to engage the reader as a person speaking with a person, communicating to him the way of "life" which the scholar himself has already absorbed and consciously articulates.

> Even in the founding of the great religions . . . the essential is not a doctrine comprehensible in itself but an event which is at once life and word.[27]

This does not mean that the objective content of religion does not matter:

> It matters only as it points back to man's relationship with God rather than seeking to take its place. Basically, religion is not philosophy, which seeks to know the absolute as an object of contemplation; it is a knowing which takes place within the dialogue itself and cannot be detached from it.[28]

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newspaper report offered the following quote: "Father McKenzie replied by saying: 'I don't attach so much importance to doctrine as I think Charles does. We have got more doctrine, if you weigh it by the pound, than all the other churches put together. . . . But the Church is a way of life, not a body of doctrine, and I think the Roman Church does communicate this way of life'" (National Catholic Reporter, 4.37 (1968), 7.

[26] Interpreting Hasidism, 218.

[27] Interpreting Hasidism, 218.

[28] M. Friedman, "Martin Buber's 'Theology' and Religious Education," Religious Education, 54 (1954), 6.

Of its nature, the task is personal and "transjective."[29] The scholar cannot make use of a filter; he must become a filter himself.[30] He must be able to relate to and dialogue with the wisdom contained in the various doctrinal formulations of the religion's tradition.

> A special problem has been the faithful presentation of the dialogue that has existed throughout Buber's creative life between Buber as original thinker and Buber as interpreter of tradition. Here, too, one must walk the "narrow ridge"--between the temptation of considering Buber a thinker who reads his philosophy into his interpretations and that of considering him a thinker who derives his philosophy from his religious traditions.[31]

To the superficial observer, it may seem that the spiritual scholar lightly evokes subjective, unfounded interpretations. In reality, he is severely disciplined by his heavy responsibility of fidelity and openness to the "life." This fidelity cannot be allowed to stop even at the limits of one's particular religious dogma.

Actually, any conflict between fidelity and orthodoxy can only be apparent. Buber sensed here, as in his study of Judaism, that the central truth of Hasidism

> . . . has its origin in the immovable central existence of values that in the history of the human spirit and in the uniqueness of every great religion has again and again given rise to those basic attitudes concerning the authentic way of man.[32]

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[29] W. Herberg, The Writings of Martin Buber, 15.

[30] Replies to My Critics, 731.

[31] M. Friedman, Life of Dialogue, vi.

[32] Interpreting Hasidism, 221.

No one expression of truth is unique, utterly distinct from all others; rather, each is part of the essential whole.

> When the spirit confronts us, what matters is not originality, but reality. The works of the spirit do not exist in order that we may analyze them and then examine the products of our analysis to see whether they occur here for the first time--this whole conception of "for the first time" can govern only a petty, near-sighted mind with no notion of how the human spirit in its history brings forth something eternally new from materials eternally the same.[33]

The truth of Hasidism . . . is the wisdom of Judaism . . . is the voice of the Spirit through the world. Obviously this method requires great maturity and wisdom on the part of the scholar, and the validity of his scholarship is gauged ultimately by how well his work is "recognized" in the mind and heart of his audience.

Evaluation of Materials

Scholem also contends that Buber was highly selective in his choice of source material. Hasidic primary sources fall into two categories: the theoretical writings--homilies, commentaries on Biblical and Kabbalistic texts, and tracts on prayer and other devotional topics; and the legendary writings--legendary anecdotes, aphorisms, sayings, and tales of miraculous deeds.

The more important theoretical material was produced between 1770 and 1815 while Hasidism flourished in Poland and Russia. After 1815, an even greater amount of material was developed, but it added little to the earlier period in the order of creativity. The legendary material crystallized gradually between 1800 and 1850. The legends of the Baal Shem Tov were set down about 1815. "Since about 1860, several hundred volumes of this type have been published. . . ."[34]

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[33] M. Buber, "Myth in Judaism," Commentary, 9 (1950), 563.

Scholem gives priority to the theoretical material primarily because it is the older in publication and therefore represents the purer Hasidic teaching. He has the later legendary writings serve as commentary on the theoretical. His criticism, then, is that Buber has selected the legendary material to the almost total exclusion of the theoretical, thus neglecting materials produced fifty years earlier during Hasidism's most creative period.

> This continuous emphasis on the pre-eminence of legendary tradition over the theoretical literature reveals a methodological principle of approach which I consider more than questionable.[35]

Buber replies that the genre of "legendary anecdote" must be better understood.[36] While the theoretical writings were set down in writing immediately by the individual Zaddiks who originated them or by their disciples, the legends were formed and transmitted orally from one community to another, from one generation to another. The oral transmission was preserved during the lifetime of the master and finally recorded in writing only many years afterward. During a third phase, the tales were gradually assembled.

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[34] A Critique, 308.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Interpreting Hasidism, 220. The legend centered around the utterance of a Zaddik as he spoke to his disciples or to the community. Although the context was didactic in character, the story was always recalled as a religious event, never as an abstract teaching. The story usually had a manifold significance, but either ended in a saying or clarified itself by referring to one. These legends formed part of the liturgy of the "third meal," and developed a sacramental character for the Hasidim, an important aspect to be further developed in Chapter eight. See Chapter 4, 101; Chapter 8, 205; G. Scholem, Major Trends, 349-50.

> It thus becomes evident that the late transmission and collection and, above all, the late publication of the cycles of the mystical legends, give no support to the assertion that they are of questionable value as sources. The standard collection of the legends of the Baal Shem, for example, did not appear in print until fifty-five years after his death.[37]

From this understanding of the legendary genre, Buber makes two points in defense of his selection: (1) although more recent in publication than the theoretical writings, the legends are older in origin and therefore of greater value in communicating the original Hasidic spirit; (2) both forms of literature in themselves are documents, that is, commentaries on life rather than the life itself. But of the two, the legend is far more pregnant with the life of the community than the theoretical material, for (a) it attempts to preserve religious event rather than doctrine; (b) it originated in the very heart of the community's life; and (c) it was preserved and constantly reshaped by the living memory of the community before being solidified into writing. Nurtured so intimately by the community, the legend could not help but breathe the Hasidic life.

> Because Hasidism in the first instance is not a category of teaching but one of life, our chief source of knowledge of Hasidism is its legends, and only after them come its theoretical literature, the latter a commentary, the former the

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[37] _Interpreting Hasidism_, 221.

> text, even though a text that has been handed down in a state of extreme corruption. . . . It is foolish to protest that the legend does not convey to us the reality of Hasidic life. Naturally, the legend is no chronicle, but it is truer than chronicle for those who know how to read it.[38]

The legendary-genre argument did not persuade Scholem. He suggested that the real reason for Buber's preference of the legends is that they "lend themselves to a subjectivist interpretation more easily than the theoretical writings which contain a sustained life of argument."[39]

> It is very interesting to note that in the course of the years, as Buber's existentialist and subjectivist "philosophy of the dialogue" became more developed and elaborated, his references to the theoretical literature of Hasidism become ever weaker and more scanty. I dare say that many readers of Buber would never so much as suspect that such a literature even exists.[40]

Scholem also suspects that Buber's preference is elected because the theoretical writings are "too dependent on the earlier Kabbalistic literature."[41] This argument requires some explanation.

Earlier in their writings, both Buber and Scholem approach Hasidism as a whole and agree that Hasidism was "Kabbalah turned Ethos."[42] Buber, quoting Scholem, says:

> Gershom Scholem correctly says that Hasidism produced no mystical doctrine that went essentially beyond the Kabbalistic tradition, in which "personality takes the place of doctrine."[43]

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[38] OMH, 27.

[39] A Critique, 309.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] See above, Chapter 4, 116.

[43] Interpreting Hasidism, 221. Quote from Major Trends, 344.

And Scholem, quoting Buber, also agrees that

> There is much truth in Buber's remark in the first of his Hasidic books that Hasidism represents "Kabbalah turned Ethos," but a further ingredient was needed . . . [religious community].[44]

They agree that Hasidism accepted the Kabbalah's texts and vocabulary but reinterpreted them from the original platonic, gnostic meaning, into a new ethical concern "referring to [the] values of the personal life of man and his relation to God. Great emphasis is placed on this moral reading of the old vocabulary.[45]

But as Buber and Scholem's work develop, both sense a wider variance of thought within Hasidism. Scholem came to favor, as the "pure Hasidism," the content of the theoretical writers who, in their use of the Kabbalah doctrine, retained the platonic if not full gnostic interpretation. For him, Kabbalah is gnostic, even in Hasidism.

> The Hasidic authors obviously were not aware of having broken in any way with the gnostic traditions of Cabbalism, and they wrote plainly as gnostics--Buber's protest to the contrary notwithstanding.[46]

Buber fully agrees that one school of Hasidism was platonic and gnostic, and that the doctrine of this school was strongly represented in the theoretical writings.

> There is . . . not a little in Hasidism that I am, to be sure, obliged to interpret within the framework of my presentation of it, but that I cannot in the least make my own, in particular the Kabbalistic ideas, taken over and developed by Hasidism, of the emanations of God and their relationship to one another. These are essentially Gnostic ideas, and I have ever again most decisively opposed Gnosis,

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[44] Major Trends, 342. [45] A Critique, 310.

[46] Ibid., 309.

which presumes to know, so to speak, the inner history of God.[47]

But Hasidism embraced two schools of thought. Which of the two represents the basic or pure Hasidic spirit and which represents the secondary or corrupt Hasidism? This new question becomes primary to the question of the proper evaluation of materials just considered.[48]

Spiritualistic versus Realistic Interpretation

As a first step in analyzing this element of the debate, it helps to begin with the area of common agreement. Although Scholem and Buber, as well as Schatz-Uffenheimer, will ordinarily speak of the teaching of Hasidism as if it were a monolithic point of view, they agree that Hasidism actually embraced divergent points of view, commonly divided into two schools of thought: spiritualistic and realistic.[49]

The spiritualistic school is represented by Dov Baer of Mezritch and his disciples, with some elements in the sayings of the Baal Shem Tov. Their doctrine seemed to emphasize a division between God and world, and encouraged the Hasid to rise above the world.

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[47] S. and B. Rome (eds.), Philosophical Interrogations, 89.

[48] A Critique, 315.

[49] R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, op. cit., 405; A Critique, 314; Interpreting Hasidism, 224; Replies to My Critics, 734-9; J. Weiss, "Contemplative Mysticism and 'Faith' in Hasidic Piety," The Journal of Jewish Studies, 4 (1953), 19-29. See also footnote no. 23 on page 127 of this chapter.

The realistic school also finds roots in the Baal Shem, but is "concentrated in such figures as the Berditchever, R. Zusya, and R. Moshe Leib of Sasov."[50] This school saw religious life as a process of uniting the two worlds, and encouraged the Hasid to estimate this world as good, to embrace and redeem it.

This distinction can be clarified through several examples. A spiritualist, looking at marriage and sex, would accept it cautiously and only as a means to an end.

> If you see a beautiful woman, says Rabbi Baer of Mezritch, do not think of her beauty in its concrete palpable shape, but abstract from its concrete reality and concentrate your mind on the divine beauty that shines through the concrete phenomenon. Then you will no longer behold the beautiful and tempting here and now which is this woman, but the ideal and everlasting quality of beauty which is one of God's attributes.[51]
>
> Rabbi Menahan Mendel of Mezritch: Let him love his wife only as he loves the Tefilin, only because they are God's command; and let him not muse on her, for he is only like one who travels to the fair, and he cannot travel without a horse, but should he therefore love the horse? Is there a greater foolishness than that? Thus, in this world man needs a wife for the service of God, in order to merit the world to come.[52]

In the realistic school, on the contrary, one is instructed to embrace the here and now of marriage and find God within the relationship.

> The completed man [perfect man] may accomplish high unification [i.e., unite God with His Shekinah, dwelling here

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[50] Interpreting Hasidism, 224.

[51] A Critique, 313.

[52] R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, op. cit., 425.

> in exile] even with his bodily action, such as eating, drinking, sexual intercourse. . . .[53]
>
> In the Polnaer tradition . . . the relationship between body and soul is compared to that between husband and wife, by which each is only half of a being and is directed to the other half to attain the fulfillment of life.[54]
>
> Baal Shem Tov . . . refused comfort after the death of his wife and said: "I had hoped to journey to heaven in a thunderstorm like Elijah, but now it has been taken from me, for I am now only half a body.[55]

In the process of redemption, is the concrete world to be annihilated or redeemed? The spiritualists see annihilation as God's way.

> The doctrine of the uplifting of the sparks by human activity means that there is indeed an element in reality with which man can, and should, establish a positive communion, but the liberation or realization of this element simultaneously annihilates reality insofar as "reality" signifies . . . the here and now . . . Man communes not with the here and now itself . . . but with what is hidden in the negligible garment of the here and now.[56]

Scholem describes the redemptive process as one of abstraction and separation. His disciple states it even more directly:

> Life in the world was transformed into life in God not because it was itself sanctified, . . . but because Hasidism developed an indifference to the concrete and raised its eyes to the meaning of existence and not to existence itself.
>
> This contact with the world as a sacrament, which seems at first sight a bridging of the chasm between the two realms, is in fact a contact that divides.[57]

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[53] Interpreting Hasidism, 222.

[54] Replies to My Critics, 736.

[55] R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, op. cit., 425.

[56] A Critique, 312. [57] R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, op. cit., 410.

The realistic school, on the other hand, sees redemption as a "realizing" of the world in its true depth and meaning. Just as the platonic mind necessarily sees the "significance of reality" as a separate entity from "reality" itself, so the existential mind sees the two as a potential unity to be realized and responded to by man. Buber describes the process as a "bridging."

> It is not true . . . that my version of Hasidism can be summed up in the words that here "the rift between God and the world is closed." It is not closed but bridged over, and certainly with the paradoxical instruction to man that he ever again set foot on the invisible bridge and thereby make it real.[58]

This process of redemption includes everything--all the corporeal, the "evil urges" of man, even sin.[59]

Buber observes that the two schools are largely a result of the two kinds of Zaddikism. One is essentially teacher who centers his influence on his immediate disciples, standing above them and giving them his true doctrine. The other Zaddik-type is essentially helper who reaches out to the entire community. His more democratic attitude encourages each to find his own inner truth.[60]

> The most important difference between the two schools is not to be seen in a difference of doctrines, but in one of "existence": in Lublin the teacher imposed himself on his

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[58] Replies to My Critics, 736.

[59] Interpreting Hasidism, 223.

[60] Replies to My Critics, 738. See below, Chapter 8, 213.

disciples, in Pshysha he helped them to become themselves.[61]

There are many other examples of the distinction between the two schools, each of which could be amply demonstrated from the Hasidic writings.

Scholem maintains that Buber has used Hasidism as a paradigm, reading into it his existential philosophy. Yet the presence and content of the realistic school in Hasidism has been verified, not only by Buber's writings, but by references in the writings of Scholem, Schatz-Uffenheimer, L. Newman,[62] and the work of J. Weiss.[63] Realism is one valid interpretation of Hasidism.

> There is no conformity of ideas on any basic religious question [in Hasidism]. There is, on the contrary, a dichotomy of directions which find direction in two theoretical systems. . . . No difference more fundamental than that between these two schools of thought can exist within a religious movement. To present Hasidism as a uniform movement is to take no account of the vital differences that exist in it.[64]

But Scholem contends that Buber has presented only the realistic interpretation, implicitly denying a polarity of thought within Hasidism. It is difficult to understand the basis of this criticism. The entire Chronical, For the Sake of Heaven, describes the basic tension and dialectic between the spiritualists and the realists. Each school is fully expounded and situated within the totality of the Hasidic movement.

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[61] *Ibid.*, 741.

[62] L. Newman, *The Hasidic Anthology*, New York, 1963.

[63] J. Weiss, *op. cit.*, 19-29.

[64] *Ibid.*, 29.

Buber has succinctly described the Hasidic picture as follows:

> What I have in fact recognized as the great Hasidic contribution to the belief in the redemption of the world is this: that each man can work on its redemption but none can effect it. This is an insight common to all Hasidism. In the inner dialectic of the movement, however, two basic views stand opposed to each other. The one asserts that man can work on redemption . . . through exerting a magical influence, . . . the other declares in contrast that man can only work on redemption . . . through moving with his whole being to God, "turning" to him. . . .[65]

However, it must be granted that Buber's style of presentation often leads his reader into misunderstanding. For the sake of clarity, he abstracts the poles of tension, and presents them as if they existed in reality in pure form. He then praises the higher side to such a degree that it seems as if he were condemning the opposite side. In actuality, he embraces both poles as necessary in the search for inherent unity.

This movement toward unity has been treated in chapter three; here allow a brief résumé: The I-Thou does not exist in pure form, except with the Eternal Thou. None of our relationships can be pure I-Thou nor totally I-It. Nor is the It to be classified as dispensable or evil.[66]

If applied to Buber's Hasidism, we see that there is no Hasid free of gnosticism, nor any spiritualist who does not espouse some traces of realism. The schools are abstractions, traces of which are found in each Hasid, especially in their founder, the Baal Shem Tov. Again, while Buber has no sympathy for gnosticism, he fully recognizes the presence and even the essential role the gnostic Kabbalah plays in the Hasidic community, and its dialectic relationship to the Hasidic "life." The ordinary reader must not be misled into thinking that these abstractions existed as such in the real order; Buber himself points this out repeatedly.

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[65] Replies to My Critics, 739.

[66] M. Beek and S. Weiland, Martin Buber, 73.

One final observation remains to be made in this area of criticism. If the purpose of a study of Hasidism is to give an objective, historical evaluation, then it would have to be concluded that both schools exist, side by side within the movement, without judgment of purity or corruption. But if the purpose of the study is to discover the life of Hasidism, that is, to pick out that element which made it so vital and without which it would not have become renowned, then it would have to be noted that the spiritualistic school was present before, during, and after the Hasidic phenomenon, while the realistic school was present only during its flourishing period. Life is not doctrine, but existence. At the very least, it can be contended that the life that was Hasidism finds its better expression in the realistic school.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the criticism of Buber's Hasidic interpretation, especially through the extensive work of the greatest living expert in Jewish mysticism, Gershom Scholem.

The first area of examination was the method of study. If judged as an objective, historical, [illegible] comprehensive study, Buber's work limps badly. But if accepted as a spiritual study, seeking to re-present the unique vital force of Hasidism, we cannot judge the results on objective standards, but can only evaluate the maturity of the scholar.

The second area was the evaluation of material. It was established that the material closest to the first fifty years of Hasidism, the period of its creativity, is the best source. If gauged by publication dates, Buber slighted the better material, the theoretical writings. However, if we accept Buber's genre of legendary anecdote, then he employed the richer sources.

The third area concerned Buber's interpretation itself. Evidence indicates that his "realistic" interpretation does exist in early Hasidism, along with the other platonic, gnostic interpretations. Again, if we are in search of an historic presentation of Hasidism, Buber's work is limited and prejudiced. If, however, we accept his goal--a search for the vital force within the whole of Hasidism--we again cannot judge his conclusion wholly on objective criteria, but can only make our personal response. In conclusion, it is fitting to present Buber's own defense of his interpretation:

> This is the basis of my selection. I have chosen what I have chosen; rather I have let Hasidism go through my heart as through a filter because here is a way, one only to be sensed, but a way. I have stated this principle time after time with what appeared to be sufficient clarity.

> It seemed clear enough to me that I was concerned from the first to the last with restoring immediacy to the relation between man and God, with helping to end "the eclipse of God."[67]

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[67] Interpreting Hasidism, 224. See also the "Foreword" of FSH and the title essay of HMM for earlier statements of the above principle.

PART II

Buber's Hasidic Vision of "World":

Dialectic Affirmation

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Buber's Hasidic Vision of "World": Dialectic Affirmation

Buber's Hasidic vision of "world" steps forward out of the pages of For the Sake of Heaven, Tales of Hasidism, Ten Rungs, Hasidism and Modern Man, and The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism.

The vision is one of world affirmation. It rejects lofty spiritualism or idealism that seeks to transcend the material world of here and now into realms beyond or in denial of man's present experience. It equally avoids the crass naturalism or the vulgar secularism that reduces world to the narrow concepts of the immediate, devoid of radical plan or purpose. The vision neither denies the dualistic character of the world nor absolutizes it.

The Hasid is able to avoid these extremes and still religiously affirm his world by means of a dynamic process of alternation, a dialectic. Conflicting polarities are embraced rather than denied. The tension is endured as creative rather than shunned as evil. It is the interplay, the alternation between the two that eventually resolves into unity.

Dialectic affirmation is the theme of Buber's Hasidic "world." It is best analyzed and its implications best explored by developing four variations on this theme. The first analyzes the theme on the broad conceptual level of Hasidic religious thought. The second traces the dialectic process linearly and observes its dynamic affirmation at each of its critical points. A third theme observes the Hasidic world in its concrete realization, the community; and the fourth studies our present world in the light of this dialectic, diagnosing its crisis and pointing a way into the future.

CHAPTER VI

DIALECTIC AFFIRMATION: BUBER'S ORIENTING PRINCIPLE OF THE HASIDIC RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Religiosity: Affirmation of World

All history is seen as a dialogue between God and man.[1] In this conversation, man is not only a full, active partner, speaking his word of response,[2] but when he responds, his word creates both himself and the world. This dialogue, considered as creative, is termed "life," or sometimes "soul-force."

Ordinarily, this "soul-force" lies hidden in the world, but occasionally it becomes manifest among a particular people and at a particular historic moment. Judaism has, as her destiny, sacramentalized this force before all mankind. Hasidism was its most recent manifestation. And although this Hasidic manifestation has since degenerated, the "soul-force" continues to live, streaming through the historic process of mankind.[3]

It is precisely this point which leads Buber to distinguish between religion and religiosity (Religiosität).[4]

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[1] IW, 16. [2] IW, 13. [3] HMM, 48-49.

[4] Sometimes translated "religiousness." Neither translation is a happy one. Religiosity bears a connotation of pretense or shallow religion and religiousness gives nothing of Buber's broad concept. The reader is asked to keep in mind Buber's concept; he intends it even for the first word, "religion," unless the context indicates the pejorative sense.

"Religion" refers [redacted]ual customs of a people in their permanent, expressed and set forms. "Religiosity" is the life-experience of a people as they stand face to face before God, responding to Him with an openness that effects every area of their life.[5]

> Religion [religiosity] is a reality, rather the reality, namely, the whole existence of the real man in the real world of God, an existence that unites all that is partial. . . .[6]

When the basic dichotomy discussed in chapter three is applied to these terms, "religion" structures and orients the "life" of religiosity. "Religion" is necessary and good so long as it strives to reflect and serve faithfully the superior "life." But it must allow the "life" to enter and inwardly transform its formulations with each new generation. Should the structures of religion come to dominate or even smother the "life"--standing above it, as it were--then religion has become a form of evil. It separates one from God and terminates the creative dialogue.

> It is far more comfortable to have to do with religion than to have to do with God who sends one out of home and fatherland into restless wandering.[7]

When religion dominates, it becomes a category of life, distinct from the world and restricted to a limited sphere. Religiosity, on the other hand, cannot be so limited; it embraces the totality of one's life.

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[5] M. Friedman, Life of Dialogue, 41. Henceforth, this will be referred to as Life.

[6] ABH, 111.

[7] ABH, 110.

Buber, who usually resisted being categorized as an existentialist, theologian or philosopher, heartily agreed when Walter Kaufmann summed up his work as that of a religious thinker.[8] But he agreed only in this sense:

> It will not do to serve God only in isolated hours and with set words and gestures. One must serve God with one's whole life, with the whole of the everyday, with the whole of reality.[9]

So to Buber as to the Baal Shem, true religion is world-affirming. The world is not an illusion to be rejected, but a reality through which, and in which, God dialogues with man. It is the world that bears our answer of service to Him. It is this world that is to be redeemed through our divine-human meeting.[10]

Were a Hasid, then, to be asked to choose between love of God and love of neighbor, he would select the latter, for in his eyes the "true love of God begins with the love of man."[11] This is not to deny that each includes and requires the other; the stress, however, is placed on the idea that it is "the way from world to God that is ever again indicated as decisive for personal development."[12]

Faith and revelation are also matters of this world.[13] One comes to believe only what one experiences through life. Inward truth becomes authentic only in real life; without life-experience, it cannot be sustained as truth.

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[8] Replies to My Critics, 742.

[9] HMM, 49-50.

[10] HMM, 180.

[11] HMM, 237.

[12] HMM, 238.

[13] ABH, 114.

> A drop of Messianic consummation must be mingled with each hour; otherwise the hour is godless, despite all piety and devotions.[14]

This leads to a further comment on an apparent contradiction in Buber's general appraisal: he describes Hasidism as both "continuous" and "discontinuous." In its religious formulative aspect, Buber emphasizes that Hasidism expressed

> not the readiness to change everything, but the continuity of a life of faith which was both enthusiastic and yet strove after the cohesion of the generations.[15]

It was a fusion and continuation of two traditions: the Judaic law and ritual formulation, and the religious knowledge of the Kabbalah. But in the cohesive situation of community life, these old principles were brought forth out of the continuing tradition and given a new illumination.[16]

Yet continuity with the past also embraces the element of a "turning." Hasidism was not simply an emotional reaction to an overly rational rabbinicalism, but an evidenced breakthrough of present "life" over old religious categories that no longer responded to present experiences. Hasidism answered a "passionate demand for wholeness" and "a genuine vision of unity."[17]

While both the surface traditions and principles, and the

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[14] OJ, 209.

[15] TTF, 28.

[16] OMH, 117.

[17] OMH, 172. For clarity, Buber limits his interpretation to the tension between Hasid and Orthodox Rabbis. Another interpretation emphasizes Hasidism as a psychological response to the continual persecutions that made emotional stability almost impossible to maintain.

"life force" striving to be manifested through these formulations, bear a "continuity" down through the generations, the essential quality of that "life-force" is "discontinuity"--a genuine, unconditioned openness to the Eternal.

> The complete, the legitimately religious existence of man, does not stand in a continuity, but in the genuine acceptance and mastery of a discontinuity.[18]

This means that Hasidism strove to deschematize the mystery and restore the cosmic-metacosmic power and responsibility of man. "All worlds depend on his works, all gaze at and long for the teaching and the good deeds of man."[19] Again, note that the dichotomy of continuity/discontinuity resembles the basic dichotomy of I-It/I-Thou.

Devekuth: Dialectic Embrace of Contradictories

His critics unanimously agree when Buber maintains that the central theme of Hasidism is devekuth, cleaving to God in all things. But he immediately adds that this traditional doctrine takes two different forms in Hasidism. He observes an inner dialectic of "spiritualization" and "hallowing."

According to the "spiritualization" polarity, one unites himself with God in a manner that lifts him out of this world, annihilating the world into the "nothingness" of pure spirit. The "hallowing" tradition, on the other hand, asserts that unity with

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[18] ABH, 110.

[19] OMH, 124. I-It seeks to stabilize, organize, continue in existence what has been established. I-Thou risks leaving the external structure of the present order to open itself to new meeting. I-Thou alone embraces the "life."

God is to be gradually realized by dedicating to Him the totality of one's life in this world. In this tradition, the world, rather than being annihilated, is redeemed into its full potential.[20]

This inner dialectic is not only particular to the Hasidic situation, but, in the mind of Buber, it is the essential dialectic of all mankind--a particular manifestation of the condition of alternation in the process toward unification. But of the two polarities, the "hallowing" is the original thesis and the "spiritualization" that which follows it, clearly stemming from the ever stronger taking over of the Kabbalistic tradition.[21]

Buber gave an immense amount of attention to the unfolding of this dialectic. The entire Chronicle: For the Sake of Heaven develops this conversation, and embraces many themes, especially redemption, evil, and messianism.

It is Buber's contention that the "hallowing" theme bears the "soul-force" of Hasidism. In this vein, the essential cleaving cannot be to a third-person image one has of God, nor to a faith one has mentally conceived, but only a cleaving to the existing, second-person God who stands over-against him, addressing him directly in his life-experience.

> The earth would not hold fast to its conception of the sun (if it had one) nor to its connection with it, but to the sun itself.[22]

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[20] Interpreting Hasidism, 221.

[21] Replies to My Critics, 734.

[22] EG, 159.

God cannot be cleaved to in abstraction nor in theories nor techniques, but in lived life. A legend tells of a young Hasid who goes to live with Rabbi Abraham Haim of Zloczov, an innkeeper, to learn his secret of cleaving.

> For two weeks the disciple observed the customs of the landlord. He saw each day how he prayed and how he worked, and marked nothing especial in him. Only in the evening after all the guests had gone and in the early morning before they came, he did not know with what Rabbi Abraham Haim occupied himself. At last he dared to ask him about it. The latter said to him that in the evening he washed all the dishes, and as in the night, dust settled on them, he washed them anew in the morning, but he was especially careful to see that they did not become rusty. When his disciple returned to Rabbi Shmelke and told him all this, he said, "Now you know what you need to know."[23]

God is best approached in the extreme concrete of the everyday. "The key to truth is the next deed, and this key opens the door if one does what one has to do in such a way that the meaning of the action here finds its fulfillment."[24]

Pansacramentalism: Affirmation through Dialectic

When many of his contemporaries were caught up in the trend toward demythologization, Buber stood as defender and champion of the myth and symbol as fundamental bridges in man's relationship with God. The parallel concept of myth and its particular Hasidic form, the legend, will be developed in the eighth chapter. Like its related concept, symbol, it is seen as a visible "making present" of the permanent and directional spoken word.[25] Buber distinguishes between the symbol as sign, which merely manifests the covenant of the Absolute with the concrete, and the symbol as sacrament, which embodies the covenant of the Absolute in the concrete.[26]

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[23] OMH, 227.

[24] OMH, 228. Note the similarity to the Christian "little way" of St. Theresa of Lisieux and the teaching of St. Francis of Assisi.

Sacramental symbols are not devised or manufactured by man, but come forth out of life to speak and embody the life-force of man's relationship with God. Man comes to realize the voice speaking through them and so enters into the meeting they embody. But these very symbols which man uses to address God can often degenerate into objects and thus stand in the way of that conversation.[27] The primal danger of the "religious" enters in. Symbols become established as "things" for their own sake. Their ability as open spirits, to bear to us the deeper reality, is destroyed.[28] Buber calls this the cultic-sacramental. Amputated from the world of the lived everyday, sacrament and reality become separated with the result that both lose their meaning. The Eternal Thou is substituted by an image of Him--or It; the bridge is broken.[29]

Primitive man was pansacramental. The sacred and the profane were one; all reality was the tongue of God. The unfortunate separation of sacred and profane occurred sometime between the eighth and the fourth century before Christ as man began to "select" his own sacraments for his sacred order. As this separation continued, man imagined that he had removed the world from a position between him and God, but in removing the world as sacrament, he had removed the reality of God as well. Man was left with only a created image. The soul was alone; dialogue became monologue.[30]

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[25] E. Biser, "Martin Buber," Philosophy Today, 7 (1963), 105.

[26] OMH, 165.

[27] M. Friedman, Life, 115.

[28] OMH, 153.

[29] OMH, 94.

Spinoza saw that there was no intercourse between man and God during this period of absolute dichotomy of sacred and profane. But when he saw that the image of man's mind was separated from the life-giving dialogue, he concluded that the created image was false and misleading, and that God was beyond address. As a result, the separation was intensified.

So restricted to the sacred order, sacramental symbols inevitably came to be seen as objective forces--"ex opere operato." So separated from the world, they inevitably became separated from man as well.[31]

Although the Reformation attempted to overcome this duality and its resulting sterility, Buber senses that a great fear of secularism blocked any full solution.

> It seems as though the man who has passed through the discovery of the fundamentally not-holy [profane world] can no longer restore a holy relationship to the whole world.[32]

For any attempt to reunite the sacred and the profane seemed only to lead to pantheism and consequently to a dissolving of religion into total secularism.

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[30] OMH, 94-5.

[31] OMH, 168.

[32] OMH, 169.

Hasidism overcame this dilemma through its new form of pansacramentalism. It did not offer a simple return to the pantheism and pansacramentalism of the primitive, eliminating all distinction between sacred and profane, but rejected the absolute, static opposition to these two orders. The world is dynamic, involved in a linear process of unification based on the realization that these two orders are not fundamentally noressentially distinct.[33] Buber first describes this in terms of the historic religious crisis of the central European Jews.

The Jew of this period was heavily oppressed by rabbinical legalism and yearned to be free of the law.[34] Sabbatainism[35] thought to solve the problem by an antinomian response: the law no longer binds us.

Hasidism, faced with the same problem neither threw over all law, nor restored it to its prior rigidity. Rather, it preserved Torah by converting its fixed boundaries into flowing ones.[36]

The rabbinical interpretation of the Law divided the world into sacred and profane. The sacred was to be kept holy by "mitzvot"--do's and don'ts. The profane was filled with "adiaphora"--indifferent acts. Man was commanded to hallow the first only, through the mitzvot.

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[33] Buber's resolution can be called Panentheism, a teaching with similarities to that of Berdyaev, Whitehead, Teilhard de Chardin, Tillich, and several other modern philosophers. Cf. The New Catholic Encyclopedia, 10, 943 ff.

[34] See above, footnote 18.

[35] See Chapter Four, p. 91. [36] OMH, 49.

Hasidism, on the other hand, saw the Torah as open, continuing to embrace more and more of creation until all would be [illegible] hallowing and nothing would be considered profane. Religious life is one of completing Torah, not of becoming free of it.[37]

> A disciple asked Rabbi Mendel of Rymanov: "The Talmud says that Abraham fulfilled all the commandments. How is that possible, since they had not yet been given?" "You know," said the Rabbi, "that the commandments of the Torah correspond to the bones, and the prohibitions to the sinews of man. Thus, the entire Law includes the entire body of man. But Abraham had made every part of his body so pure and holy that each of itself fulfilled the command intended for it.[38]

The work of hallowing goes beyond the present, specified area of the written law, and gives equal value to all functions, adiaphora as well as mitzvot. The mitzvot merely makes explicit some of the totality of actions to be made "holy" and so elevated out of the order of "profane."

> He who performs a mitzva with perfect kavanah, i.e., he who accomplishes the action in such a manner that his whole existence is concentrated in it and is directed in it to God, works on the hallowing of the world, on its conquest for God.[39]

The demarcation between designated and non-designated is provisional. "Everything that is done with kavanah can be the right, the redeeming act."[40]

If the orthodox Jew set aside certain things to be hallowed, the Hasidim sought to hallow all, without distinction.

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[37] OMH, 51.

[38] TH 2, 135.

[39] OMH, 50.

[40] OMH, 52.

> The profane is now regarded only as a preliminary stage of the holy; it is the not-yet-hallowed. But human life is destined to be hallowed in all its natural, that is created, structure.[41]

The holy is that which is open to divine transcendence; the profane is that which is yet closed off from this transcendence, and the "hallowing" is the event opening the profane out to the transcendence. "God dwells where one lets Him in, . . ."[42] that is, where man hallows the profane by meeting the here and now with intention. Nothing is unholy in itself; nothing is evil in itself.

The holy Yehudi expresses his conviction that we cannot call this world God's if it is forever divided.

> If the world is to be forevermore divided between God and Satan, how dare we say that it is God's world? You say: those two were not one. Granted. But is that to remain true to the very end of days? And if they are ultimately to become one, when will that becoming one begin? . . . Is it for this that He gave us a mouth which can convey the truth of our heart to an alien heart and a hand which can communicate to the hand of our recalcitrant brother something of the warmth of our very blood?[43]

This pansacramentalism of Hasidism, which renewed the dialogue between God and man, and restored "life" to the symbolic sacraments, was not an invention, a new thought added to the Kabbalah tradition, but a grasping of the hidden old. For all its gnostic faults, the Kabbalah was not essentially dualistic but envisioned an ultimate unity. Through its system of Kavanot, it felt it could bring about unity between the En-Sof and the exiled Shekinah.[44]

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[41] HMM, 29-30. [42] Ibid. [43] FSH, 121.

But Hasidism did protest two applications of the Kabbalah to this conviction. For one, the Kabbalah pre[illegible] to [illegible] through the mystery of unity with a clear, schematized doctrine. Determined by these principles of certitude, the Kabbalah never hesitated or shuddered before this mystery, but clearly established its plan of procedure. Hasidism, in its holy insecurity, sought to endure the contradiction between apparent duality and basic potential unity. It continued to redeem it in the everyday, even though the nature or time of the ultimate unification could not be seen or schematized.[45]

Secondly, Hasidism objected to the Kabbalah's forced solution to the contradiction by works of magic and kavanot--prayers, gestures, amulets, techniques of name and letter divination.

The Hasid preferred to endure the contradiction by his everyday life-embracing approach of devotio; that is, he approached each act with the whole of his being, yet in an unarbitrary, unpremeditated manner.

> We can, indeed, prepare ourselves ever again for the deed, but we cannot prepare the deed itself.[46]

Creation and Redemption

This pansacramental theme, which rejected an absolute duality of sacred and profane, and preferred a dynamic "becoming" toward unification, carried itself over into an understanding of creation and redemption.

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[44] OMH, 143-7. See Chapter Four, p. 110 ff.

[45] OMH, 179.

[46] OMH, 181.

Buber, like most Jewish scholars, rejects the second, dualistic creation motif--the primordial establishment of two equal powers of good and evil,[47] and accepts the first motif of God's creating all. All is basically good and no uncreated power stands in opposition to it.

Evil is not an absolute polarity, nor a self-subsisting essence or essential property of things. Rather, evil is chaos, the not-standing-firm, the not-deciding, the not-taking-creative-direction. Evil is not a permanent reality, but the unredeemed condition of the not-yet-hallowed.[48]

As the first creation did not stand fast in singular decision and direction but rather "fell" into confusion, so the first man did not stand firm, but fell into similar chaos. His was not a decisive rebellion against God, but weak directionlessness. Man knows, in the "knowing" of life-experience, this indecisive situation.[49]

But if he "knows" fall from creation, he also "knows" the other

> . . . mysterious, inconceivable moments, that gentlest breakthrough, the receiving of direction, the decision, the turning of the swirling world movement to God. . . .

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[47] See J. McKenzie, The Two-Edged Sword, 80 f.

[48] OMH, 100. Compare to evil as privation according to Thomas Aquinas: S. Gent. 3, Ch. 7; S. Theo. 1, Q. 48, A. 1.

[49] OMH, 102.

> That he [man] can bring ruin on the world signifies that he can work for its redemption.[50]

Creation and redemption are essentially one, though also at present a "becoming" polarity, the one responding to the other. Creation is not a "once" in the beginning, but at every moment.[51] And not merely in every moment in the sense that this series will add up to creation, but rather that each moment is both in the sequence of time and a total act of creation within itself.

So, too, redemption is not a single event that will occur at the end of time, nor a series of partial moments that will add up to redemption, but an event realized in each moment. Each moment not only bears the world to the goal of redemption, but is itself the full, realized moment of redemption.[52]

The next chapter's step-by-step analysis of Hasidism will explain in working order what is here pointed out as a basic motif of its pansacramentalism: the indwelling of God in the world as the basis of creation and the world in need of redemption are essentially one and the same movement.[53] For now, it is sufficient to clarify that Hasidism's new pansacramentalism sees man's relationship to God, as well as the great creation/redemption movement toward God as totally involving the world.

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[50] OMH, 103.

[51] Buber's teachings would be compatible with the Catholic understanding of original sin as a condition of all men, but it would not accept an actual state of original justice. Similarly, it is compatible with subjective redemption, but not with the objective redemption of Jesus Christ. Cf. A. Dubarle, The Biblical Doctrine of Original Sin, New York, 1964.

[52] OMH, 106.

[53] OMH, 100.

Through the world, we relate to God, not by device, but as before a mystery.

> Sacramental substance cannot be found or manipulated in the totality of things and functions, but it believes that it can be awakened and liberated in each object and each action--not through any methods that one can somehow acquire but through the fulfilling presentness of the whole, wholly devoted man, through sacramental existence.[54]

In this sacramental existence, man is summoned and commissioned as cosmic mediator to awaken a holy reality in things--in whatever is immediate--through holy contact with them.[55]

> A great Zaddik asks his son, "With what do you pray?" He understands the meaning of the question to be, on what meditation do you base your prayer? He replies, "Everything of great stature shall bow before Thee." Then he asks the father, "And with what do you pray?" "With the floor," answers the father, "and with the bench."[56]

This is no metaphor; the word "with" is meant quite directly. A beautiful summary of this hallowing thought is given in "The Power of the Spirit":

> The world is a creation, not a reflection, not semblance, not play. The world is not something which must be overcome. It is created reality, but reality created to be hallowed. Everything created has a need to be hallowed and is capable of receiving it: all created corporeality, all created urges and elemental forces of the body. Hallowing enables the body to fulfill the meaning for which it was created. The meaning with which Creation informed man, informed the world, is fulfilled through the hallowing. Here the world is neither transfigured into something wholly spiritual nor overcome by the spirit. The spirit does not embrace a holy world, rejoicing in its holiness, nor does it float above an unholy world, clutching all holiness to itself; it produces holiness, and the world is made holy.[57]

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[54] OMH, 170.

[55] HMM, 33.

[56] HMM, 33-4.

[57] IW, 180-1.

But a less lofty, more homey expression of this truth is found in the Hasidic tale of the deaf God:

> There is a tale that a man inspired by God once went out from the creaturely realms into the vast waste. There he wandered till he came to the gates of the mystery. He knocked. From within came the cry: "What do you want here?" He said, "I have proclaimed your praise in the ears of mortals, but they were deaf to me. So I come to you that you yourself may hear me and reply." "Turn back," came the cry from within. "Here is no ear for you. I have sunk my hearing in the deafness of mortals."[58]

Transcendence and Immanence

A survey of the pansacramental principle of Hasidism raises a question. Hasidism avoids the pantheism of the primitive by adopting a pansacramentalism that sees the unification of sacred and profane as potential and in process. Does this not assert a latent pantheism--a final state of All as put forward by Oriental theologies?

This is admittedly a difficult question, and a frequent charge leveled against Buber. On one hand, he says: "In the Hasidic message the separation between life in God and life in the world, the primal evil of all religion, is overcome in genuine, concrete unity."[59] But he will immediately assert that Hasidism preserves God's distance from, and His superiority to, the world in which he nevertheless dwells. And truly, he must hold this position for, to Buber, relation is the fundamental reality, and without distance, there can be no relation, meeting, or redeeming action.

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[58] BMM, 15.

[59] OMH, 99.

In an article in The Journal of Religion, Maurice Friedman notes that two authors, Karl Heim and Melvill Channing-Pearce, describe Buber as an unqualified transcendent, while another author, J. Coates, sees him as a convinced immanentist.[60] But Buber denies the singularity of either pole:

> Of course God is the "Wholly Other," but He is also the Wholly Same, the Wholly Present. Of course he is the Mysterium Tremendum that appears and overthrows; but He is also the mystery of the self-evident, nearer to me than my I.[61]

Here again, Buber walks the narrow ridge, down the center.

> I do not rest on the broad upland of a system that includes a series of sure statements about the Absolute, but on narrow rocky ridges between the gulfs where there is no sureness of expressible knowledge but the certainty of meeting what remains undisclosed.[62]

Beyond the adoption of panentheism, stressing not the fact but the task, the question of potential pantheism is left with an unsatisfactory solution.[63] However, some further insight will be given in the following discussion of the Hasidic En-Sof (transcendent God) and the exiled Shekinah (immanent God).

In the beginning, God wanted to be known, loved, and wanted. To allow this, He willed to withdraw His Godhead (En-Sof) in a non-spatial personal sense--a process called the zim zum.[64]

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[60] "Symbol, Myth, and History in the Thought of Martin Buber," The Journal of Religion, 34 (1954), 3.

[61] IT, 79.

[62] BMM, 184.

[63] D, 6.

[64] OMH, 120-21.

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As He withdrew within Himself (transcendence), the great power and glory emanating from Him (immanence) was left to whatever limits its own freedom would impose upon itself. Ideally speaking, its response would have been to relate freely and lovingly, in a dialogical unity, with the En-Sof. However, the burden of freedom was more than it could bear and it fell into chaotic exile.

Hasidism simplified the Kabbalah's allegory of the emanations from the ten distinct sefiroth to the one, the Shekinah. The two--the En-Sof and the Shekinah--respectfully express the transcendence and the immanence of God, and their polarity relationship.[65]

When Hasidism refers to an indwelling of God in the world, it speaks of the exile of the Shekinah--a concept strikingly similar to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Shekinah's exile is self-chosen, but not for any reason of personal fault. She is accompanying man in his exile.

When Hasidism refers to the world, or to individual men, it speaks of the sparks of God's glory that, having lost direction, fell into the exile of the dark shells (the kelipot), where they move about chaotically, waiting for redemption. This exile is their own responsibility.[66]

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[65] IW, 24.

[66] The Hasidic adoption of the kelipot analogy is both beautiful and descriptive. These are the sparks of "life," the potential human in each man. But the spark is imprisoned in

Four groups are spoken of as in exile: man, world, the community of Israel, and the Shekinah. The history of each is parallel, and the one interpenetrates the other.[67] Each fall of man takes him, Israel, and the world deeper into exile with the Shekinah accompanying them, until the ultimate exile when all depends upon "turning." Yet, though we send the sparks further into exile when we sin, all is not lost. It is still redeemable; we can again raise the sparks by our turning.[68] The thrust of transformation must come from man.

> It is not merely in appearance that God has entered into exile in His indwelling in the world; it is not merely in appearance that in His indwelling He suffers with the fate of His world. And it is not merely in appearance that He waits for the initial movement toward redemption to come from the world--really initiating and not merely in appearance. How it happens that this is not appearance but reality . . . is a mystery of God the Creator and Redeemer.[69]

Though we are at fault and suffer exile justly, the Shekinah, the bride of the En-Sof, is not. The Hasid strives primarily, not for his own salvation, but for the redemption of the world--especially for the redemption of the Shekinah.[70] The Yehudi, in For the Sake of Heaven, had a holy devotion and anxiety to liberate the Shekinah. In an early tale of the Chronicle, he describes one reason why we, as yet, have succeeded so little:

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the dark shell of "mismeeting" and "thingness." So exiled, the man's power for creative love dashes about chaotically, aimlessly, wastefully, even dangerously, waiting for redemption. This yet undirected power of each man is called "the evil urge." One hopes for a "raising of the spark" by a turning and a genuine meeting.

[67] OMH, 123, 203.

[68] OMH, 81.

[69] OMH, 104-5.

[70] OMH, 213.

> You are to know that, after I left Apt and had set out on my journey, I came upon a huge hay wagon which had been overturned and blocked the road diagonally. The peasant who stood beside it called out to me, begging me to help him lift up the wagon. I looked at the wagon. Truly, my arms are not without strength and the peasant seemed quite a man, too. But how were two men to lift up that enormous weight? "I cannot do it," I said. The other snarled at me. "You can," he cried, "but you're not willing." That struck me to the heart. We had some boards; we inserted them under the wagon and used all our strength in this act of leverage. The wagon stirred and rose and stood.[71]

The wagon was the Shekinah. The peasant said that the Yehudi was unwilling because he gave up without trying to raise the Shekinah. We will never realize our great power until we believe in it and try. The peasant knew the Yehudi could, simply because the Yehudi had been sent his way. Man, so far, has failed to redeem the world because he has failed to believe in his own power and responsibility.

Buber identifies with the Yehudi. They are similar in convictions, even to the detail that the Yehudi was an ecstatic--as Buber was in his earlier years--who seeks God and attempts to raise the Shekinah outside the course of the everyday of the world. Then he is converted through this vision:

> The Yehudi beheld a woman swathed from her head to her ankles in a black veil. Only her feet were naked, and through the shallow water in which they stood it could be seen that dust, as from long wayfaring on an open road, covered them. But they also bore bleeding wounds.
>
> The woman spoke: "I am weary unto death, for ye have hunted me down. I am sick unto death, for ye have tormented me. I am shamed, for you have denied me. Ye are the tyrant, who keep me in exile.
>
> When ye are hostile to each other, ye hunt me down. When ye plot evil against each other, ye torment me. When

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[71] FSH, 32.

> ye slander each other, ye deny me. Each of you exiles his comrades and ye together ye exile me.
>
> And thou thyself, Jaacob Yitzchak, dost thou mind how thou meanest to follow me and estrangest thyself from me the more? One cannot love me and abandon the created being. I am in truth with you. Dream not that my forehead radiates heavenly beams. The glory has remained above. My face is that of the created being."
>
> She raised the veil from her face and he recognized the face.
>
> She said: "When shall I find rest? When may I go home? Will you help me, Jaacob Yitzchak? Will you help me only a little?"[72]

The Yehudi, so devoted to redeeming the exiled Shekinah, is told by her here that he has as yet failed, even a little, because he sought the spiritual out of this world, and excluded the everyday in which God dwells. The face he recognized was that of his wife, now dead, whom he had left during her life to serve the Shekinah. He would have better served by drawing closer to her. The bare feet refer to a prior temptation of seduction which he avoided by jumping out the window and running from rather than by meeting and elevating the desire of the seducer to its true, higher direction.[73]

Man fails to redeem the Shekinah because he fails to meet it here, in the immediacy of his concrete life. The basic elements of this theme bring us back to the uneasy question of transcendency and immanence of God. God, considered in Himself, is the Wholly Other, totally beyond man's comprehensive mental coneption. He is the uncomprehensible, transcendent En-Sof.

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[72] FSH, 229.

[73] FSH, 58-9. M. Friedman, Life, 155-6.

Nevertheless, God has decided to withhold His overwhelming incomprehensibility and to enter into a creative relationship with man. He dwells in the world and wishes to be personally present to man, addressing him as the Eternal Thou; yet man has not fully responded in open meeting. This potential immanence of personal presence, not yet responded to, is described as God (Shekinah) in willful exile. This exile is not God per se (En-Sof) but God as He is experienced by man (Shekinah). Again, the exile is not only in the order of the mental awareness of man but in the order of being, since man is ontologically changed as God's immanence becomes realized through relationship.

Translating this to the "alternation" spoken of in chapter three, we see that transcendence and immanence are polarized terms, parallel to the same basic polarity Buber treats so frequently. He refused to accept an absolute dichotomy between the two, or to eliminate one, relativizing or absorbing it into the other. Rather, the apparent contradiction will be resolved only in the lived-experience of real life. Although he holds that the two are potentially one, the union will come about only through the process of alternation between our orientated concepts and our new realizations in the discontinuous present. Gradually the concepts will conform more and more to the truth until unification is eventually realized.

Pivotal Role of Man in the Dialectic Process

Man stands at the very end of the out-pouring of freedom. Not only is the path of the world represented and concentrated in him, but it is he who completes the fall and as it is he who must begin the work of return and redemption.[74] In man, then, the initial decision takes place. Here Buber lays down an astonishing principle: God needs man!

> You know always in your heart that you need God more than everything; but do you not know too that God needs you--in the fullness of His eternity, needs you? . . . You need God in order to be--and God needs you for the very meaning of your life.[75]

Though God could have redeemed the world without man, He wills not to be able to. He wills to depend upon man for the work of completing His creation. This "need" becomes, not appearance or pretense, but reality. "In history, as it takes place, God waits for man."[76]

This is not a new activism, denying or limiting God's grace. Both God's grace and man's actions are essential, the one interpenetrating the other. "Man cannot take himself in hand, so to speak, in order to hallow himself; he is never in his own hand.[77] But the beginning, the initial choice, is in man's hands.

> For his sake, for the sake of the "chooser," for the sake of him who can choose God, the world was created. Its shells are there in order that he may penetrate through them into

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[74] OMH, 104, 122. [75] IT, 82. [76] OMH, 104.

[77] HMM, 30. Once again Buber affirms both poles in the classical Christian argument of the necessity of God's grace versus the free will of man.

> the kernel. The spheres withdrew from one another in order that he may bring them nearer to one another. The creature waits for him. God waits for him. From him, from "below," the impulse of redemption must proceed.[78]

The same thought is communicated in a Hasidic legend:

> When Rabbi Shalom of Belz's wife died, some time passed when suddenly he cried and wept much. Rabbi Samuel of Kaminka, his disciple, asked him: "What is new today that you were suddenly moved so much?" He answered him thus, "I was telling God, blessed be His name, 'Oh Master of the World, you know that if I could only lift up my spouse from the grave and bring her to life, there is no hardship in the world that I would not undertake to do so; the only difficulty is that it is not within my power to do so. But you have named yourself "husband" of Knesset [the community of] Israel, "your husband and creator" and have named us "bride of your youth," and your bride of youth is prostrate on earth, and you have the power to lift her up and there is no obstruction or obstacle for you. How can you restrain yourself from lifting her up?' The Blessed Name answered me, 'If I should be satisfied with my spouse Knesset Israel as you were satisfied with your spouse, I would certainly lift her up.'"[79]

God's reply to this appeal for redemption is that the Community of Israel must first begin. The beginning must come from below, from man.[80]

Man's work of redemption is fulfilled in two steps: first, there is his quasi-orientation within himself; second, his service of God without (Avoda). Chronologically, the two occur simultaneously and interdepend--but analytically they must be presented as separate.

The first logical step is the unification of man from within--his becoming a whole person, a perfect man. Only with such wholeness and unity within can he meet and raise the sparks of the outside world through the necessary unconditioned intention.

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[78] OMH, 122-3. [79] OMH, 216. [80] Ibid.

> Rabbi Bunam taught: "Our sages say: 'Seek peace [illegible] own place.' You cannot find peace anywhere save in your own self. In the psalms we read: 'There is no peace in my bones because of my sins.' When a man has made peace within himself, he will be able to make peace in the whole world."[81]

But such peace within comes only by realizing the unique personality one has been given. Each Hasid considers himself unique. No other person before or after will have his unique characteristics. His task is to realize and perfect these characteristics, ". . . for it is because they are not perfect that the coming of the Messiah tarries."[82]

With such wholeness, man is able to penetrate the meaning of existence. Hasidic legend frequently refers to him as "the king's son,"[83] and tells of a king who built a great palace with numerous chambers, but with only one open door. All the princes were invited to appear before the king who sat enthroned in the last of the chambers. But upon entering, they saw that doors opened on all sides, leading to distant, winding halls, and again doors with further passages, and so on. Then came the king's son who saw that all the labyrinth was a mirrored illusion, and he saw his father sitting in the hall immediately before him.[84] So the perfect man, the "king's son," has penetrating vision that enables him to pass through the illusions of the world and grasp its inner meaning--the meaning of existence.

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[81] WM, 29.

[82] HMM, 111.

[83] "The greatest evil is when you forget that you are the son of a king" (HMM, 113).

[84] HMM, 85.

However, man cannot do [illegible] he needs the outside world, especially the community. His own realized uniqueness gives him the basic distance necessary to enter into relationships which comprise the path of redemption.[85]

> The individual is not a whole but a part. And the purer and more perfect he is, so much the more intimately does he know that he is a part and so much the more actively there stirs in him the community of existence.[86]

Two brief _dicta_ indicate the deep spirit of this conviction of communal inter-dependence. The first:

> As one teaches the child the consonants and the vowels and then unites them into a word, so is everyone in Israel in truth a letter of the teaching and his soul a particle of God.[87]

The second is an "in-group" comment and needs an explanation. The _yod_ is the smallest, most insignificant letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It also stands as a symbol for "Jew."

> Mark my words: when two yods stand beside each other, it signifies the name of "God"; when one stands above the other, it does not signify the name of God [but of "separation"].[88]

The Hasid was to meet his fellow Hasid without superiority or premeditated attitudes, without the intention of dominating or using him. Rather, he was to be open to the unforeseen in his brother, for the liberation and fulfillment of both as persons in the particular, unique situation of their meeting.[89]

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[85] _WM_, 17.

[86] _HMM_, 112.

[87] _HMM_, 239.

[88] _FSH_, 39.

[89] _OMH_, 171.

In this mystery of community, the weak need the strong and the strong need the weak; the high need the low and the low, the high. "The souls bind themselves to one another for greater unity and might. There is a service that only the community can fulfill."[90] The redemptive effect is reciprocal; both man and world are transformed in the relational meeting. "The task of man . . . is to affirm for God's sake the world and himself and by this very means to transform both."[91]

This transformation occurs when the man meets the world openly and unpremeditatively. He realizes that his own present unity is not entirely true--that in some way or to some degree he has not embraced his own true self. "Turning" results when he hears and acknowledges this in response.

Here Buber notes a critical difference between Hasidic and Christian piety. Hasidism rejects salvation of the individual soul as its principal goal; it centers on the redemption of the world. So in this particular area, once a sin has been fully acknowledged, the Hasid reassesses and reorientates his inner unity and immediately goes out to further meeting. There is no value placed on lengthy breast-beating or periods of penance for past faults. To do so is seen only as "an inverted form of self-love."[92]

In Hasidic life, the meaning of man cannot be contained in one pocket:

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[90] HMM, 91. [91] WM, 6. [92] WM, 33.

Everyone must have two pockets, so that he can reach into the one or the other, according to his needs. In his right pocket are to be the words: "For my sake the world was created," and in his left: "I am dust and ashes."[93]

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[93] TR, 106.

CHAPTER VII

DIALECTIC PROCESS OF WORLD REDEMPTION: CRITICAL POINTS

The world is not static, but dynamic. Its linear progression moves from primeval chaos to ultimate unification, and not in measured steps but by embracing antithetical polarities and then convulsively "breaking through" to an unsuspected unity. This affirming dialectic is not only characteristic of the entire process but of each critical stage within that process as well.

Yetzer Ha-Ra

Hasidism's world-affirming attitude can be first perceived in its understanding of evil, especially in its concept of the *yetzer ha-ra*, the evil urge.

To the primary question: "How can evil exist when God exists?" Buber can offer no answer. "The abyss that is opened by this question advances still more uncannily than the abyss of Job's question into the darkness of divine mystery."[1] It intimately involves the mystery of the transcendence and immanence of God, the separation of the *En-Sof* and the *Shekinah*.

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[1] *GE*, 58.

To the question: "What is the nature of evil?" Buber follows the narrow ridge. On the one hand, he rejects that position which opposes good and evil as two substantial realities never to be reconciled, and, on the other hand, the opinion which maintains a basic oneness of world by describing evil as illusion, not reality. Buber sees some truth in both positions, yet adopts neither.[2]

In his Chronicle: For the Sake of Heaven, the Seer of Lublin, who contends that evil is the primeval, self-subsistent reality, Gog, is opposed by the Yehudi, who teaches that evil lies primarily in the human heart.

> "Rabbi," he said in an almost failing voice, "what is the nature of this Gog? He can exist in the outer world only because he exists within us." He pointed to his own heart. "The darkness out of which he was hewn needed to be taken from nowhere else than from our own slothful and malicious hearts. Our betrayal of God has made Gog to grow so great. Neither in the world nor in the people does the power of the light prevail."[3]

> But all the conflicts of Gog and Magog arise out of those evil forces which have not been overcome in the conflict against the Gogs . . . who dwell in human hearts.[4]

This is to postulate two fundamental ideas. First, that evil is a disposition--a relative, redeemable situation of man rather than an absolute substantial being outside of man.

> The indwelling Glory embraces all worlds, all creatures, good and evil. And it is the true unity. How can it then bear in itself the opposites of good and evil? But in truth there is not opposite, for the evil is the throne of the good.[5]

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[2] M. Friedman, Life, 11.

[3] FSH, 54.

[4] FSH, 284.

[5] HMM, 208.

Secondly, that evil is not merely a psychological phenomenon, but cosmic. The evil that exists in the outside world is the expansion and effect of the evil within man.[6]

From this, Hasidism develops an understanding of two kinds of evil, later described by Buber as "directionlessness," and "relationlessness." As the Baal Shem explains:

> There are two extreme types among man. The one is a wholly evil man who knows his Lord and intends to rebel against him. The other in his delusion considers himself a wholly righteous man. In truth, however, whether he incessantly learns and prays and mortifies himself, he exerts himself in vain, for he does not have the faithfulness. And this is the difference between them: For the wholly evil man there exists a cure for his defect--when the turning awakens in him and he turns with his whole heart to God and entreats Him to show him the way where the light dwells. But the other, who is incapable of seeing the greatness of the Creator and the real service of Him, because he is righteous in his own eyes--how can he turn?[7]

The first man can "turn," that is, take decision and direction, and lead himself out of his inner chaos to unification. The second, "righteous" man is in a more difficult position because he has excluded meeting, and consequently the possibility of confronting truth in his life. In effect, he has displaced his true self for a self-created image. He accepts this image as an unquestionable truth and lives his life in conformity to it, determined ever to impose it on the world about him.

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[6] OMH, 78.

[7] HMM, 210-11. Note the parallel between this account and the Gospel parable of the pharisee and the publican, Luke 18:9-14. Relationlessness is strikingly parallel to the "sin against the Holy Spirit." Cf. Piet Schoonenberg, S.J., Man and Sin, Notre Dame, 1965, 26 ff.

It is in this format that Buber defines "guilt." He is not referring to psychological guilt--the inhibitions and repressions one feels in conflicting with society's mores, but to the situation of a man who shuns dialogue with man or world. "If the being before whom this hour places one is not met with the truth of one's whole life, then one is guilty."[8]

> He who learns the Torah and is not troubled by it, who sins and forgives himself, who prays because he prayed yesterday--the worst scoundrel is better than he![9]

Original guilt consists in remaining with oneself.

Hasidism places more attention on the first form of evil and on the evil urge. These are "the sparks of God's light, in their deepest exile, that we call evil, yearning for liberation."[10] They are trapped in the shells of this world's things and beings, called kelipot, and lie helpless, waiting to be redeemed. Sometimes they are referred to as "alien thoughts," "feelings," "emotions," "urges," or "passions."

> It is known that each spark that dwells in a stone or plant or another creature has a complete figure with the full number of limbs and sinews and, when it dwells in the stone or plant, it is in prison, cannot stretch out its hands and feet and cannot speak, but its head lies on its knees. And who with the good strength of his spirit is able to raise the holy spark from stone to plant, from plant to animal, from animal to speaking being, he leads it into freedom, and no setting free of captives is greater than this. It is as when a king's son is rescued from captivity and brought to his father.[11]

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[8] At the Turning, 56. See also M. Friedman, Life, 104 and Images of Good and Evil, 59.

[9] TR, 96.

[10] OMH, 54.

[11] HMM, 187-8. See IT, 6. The first sphere of meeting is with the less than human being.

In this sense, evil is sometimes described as the throne of good,[12] or as a rebellious servant who is, in reality, faithful and fulfilling his task,[13] or like the burning thorn bush of Moses, which, in allowing itself to be thoroughly penetrated by fire, reveals God to us.[14] All temptations, all force, come from God.

This "evil urge" is seen as chaotic power, an "aimless whirl of human potentialities without which nothing can be achieved."[15] If given no direction by man, it clutches on to any object or illusion toward which the vortex of its force happens to carry it. It is the grasping, seizing, devouring, compelling, seducing character of the directionless evil urge that results in the terrible consequences of evil in the world. The urge must be given direction.

A first step towards this urgent direction requires us to look within ourselves, to perceive our chaotic situation, and to become conscious of these strong, undirected emotions.[16] Paradoxically, we must also begin by turning our attention without; we must become conscious of God calling us to take courage, to turn, and to go out to the real world. This means leaving our pseudo-sanctuaries of gnosticism, intellectualism, and magic-sacramentalism, for hiding in any of these is to hide from our real selves.[17]

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[12] TR, 90-1.

[13] OMH, 80.

[14] OMH, 80.

[15] BMM, 78.

[16] WM, 18.

[17] WM, 12.

> A man cannot find redemption until he sees the flaws in his soul, and tries to efface them. Nor can a people be redeemed until it sees the flaws in its soul and tries to efface them. But whether it be a man or a people, whoever shuts out the realization of his flaws is shutting out redemption. We can be redeemed only to the extent to which we see ourselves.
>
> When Jacob's sons said to Joseph: "We are upright men," he answered them: "That is it that I spoke unto you, saying, 'Ye are spies."' But after that, when they confessed the truth in their hearts and with their lips, and said to one another: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother," the first sparks of their redemption were kindled, Joseph was overwhelmed with compassion; he "turned himself about from them and wept."[18]

With this acceptance of self, the Hasid does not cast away the powers of his soul, but receives them and fits them into real existence.

> Only in the strength of such an act shall we attain to that unity that does not look away from the world but embraces it. But to do this we must accomplish what is hardest of all: the transformation. We must transform the element that wants to take possession of us into the substance of true life.[19]

Decision, then, is man's response. He embraces the evil urges, liberates them from the limiting object to which they are attached and directs them to the limitless. He assembles these forces into a whole.

> The undiminished force of passionate desires and the unanswering directness of intent are one. In the realm entrusted to him, such a man perfects the world of creation.[20]

Buber remarks that this transformation is similar to the Freudian sublimation of the libido, where the energy of a sexual impulse is diverted to a higher moral or social use. But in distinction, sublimation takes place *within* a man while the "raising of the sparks" takes place *between* man and the world.[21]

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[18] TR, 113.

[19] OMH, 78.

[20] OJ, 66. See also OMH, 55.

In the abstraction necessary to present these ideas singly, Buber seems to conceive this first step of "beginning with one's self" as a work of orientation, prior to or even devoid of realization. Yet in fact, relationship is the basic context in which this Hasidic task takes place.

Even in dealing with the problem of "alien thoughts"--distracting thoughts that come during prayer--the solution is given in terms of the dialectic. Embrace the "other" of these thoughts and subsume them within a higher unity.[22]

This "embracing" attitude is Hasidism's distinctive response to evil. A legend speaks of a thief who approaches two houses at night. In the first, the master chases them away. In the second, the master catches and binds him. "Who was the hero? He who masters his urges. He compels the evil urge to teach him and he learns from it."[23] There is no spiritual mortification; no renunciation recommended.

> No renunciation is commanded. One eats in consecration, one savors one's food in consecration, and the table becomes an altar. One works in consecration and lifts the sparks that are hidden in the tools. One walks over the fields in consecration, and the silent songs of all creatures, that speak to God, enter into the song of one's soul. One drinks to one's companions in consecration, each to the other, and it is as if one studied together with them in the Torah. One dances in consecration, and a splendor radiates over the

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[21] *OMH*, 83. [22] *OMH*, 126. [23] *OMH*, 82.

> community. A man is united with his wife in consecration and the Shekinah rests over them.[24]

This is not to say "eat so you will have strength to serve," but "hallow the eating itself!"[25] The entire concept is summed up in a saying Buber is fond of repeating:

> Enoch was a cobbler. With every stitch of awl that sewed the upper leather and the sole together, he joined God and His Shekinah.[26]

This principle carries itself over beautifully into the love of one's neighbor and one's enemy.

> Dost thou not know that the primeval soul came from God and that every human soul is a part of it? And when thou seest how one of the holy particles has become entangled and is near to be suffocated, wilt thou not show mercy on it?[27]
>
> When a father complained to the Baal Shem, "My son is estranged from God; what shall I do?" he replied, "Love him more."[28]
>
> Once before a journey this Rabbi Rafael called to a disciple that he should sit beside him in the carriage. "I fear I shall make it too crowded for you," the latter responded. But the rabbi now spoke in a stronger voice, "So we shall love each other more: then there will be room enough for us."[29]

One of the primary themes of Hasidism is "love more." The more one loves, the more direction is given to power, the more evil is redeemed, the more man becomes one with his brother, the more the Shekinah is raised up toward eventual reunion with her spouse, the En-Sof. "[Love] exists in reality between the creatures, that is, it exists in God."[30]

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[24] OMH, 55-6.

[25] HMM, 188-9.

[26] OMH, 126.

[27] TTF, 77.

[28] HMM, 118.

[29] Ibid.

[30] HMM, 119.

Kavanah

Kavanah describes the intention the Hasid forms in his soul and the attitude he bears toward the world. One might describe the attitude as that of total dedication. But more than a mental perspective, it includes, on the one hand, the whole personality, "his capacities, qualities, powers, and urges . . ."[31] and, on the other, a realized participation by deed, recognizing his role in the liberation of the world.[32] It is the kavanah of the Hasidic deed that redeems the hidden spark. The deed needs the kavanah.

> The world of the word, that is the indwelling glory, longs in his speech for something of the world of thought.[33]

The two vital characteristics of the kavanah are its wholeness and its degree of intensity. Commenting on the task of Enoch the Cobbler, to this effect, the Baal Shem Tov says "All that you do . . . do it with the strength of your soul and your thoughts that you may join the holy one, blessed by He, with His Shekinah."[34]

"The Hasidic legend cannot give enough examples of the favor that shines on the undivided person and of the power of his service."[35] One legend tells how God receives the acts of such a person as a king receives the singing of a nightingale in his garden at night, "a singing that sounds sweeter to him than the homage of the princes in his throne room."[36]

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[31] IW, 175.

[32] HMM, 108.

[33] HMM, 200.

[34] OMH, 85.

[35] HMM, 92.

Such fervor rises above physical limitation. The following is one of the more popular tales:

> In his youth Rabbi Hayyim Zans was a disciple of the Zaddik of Roptchitz. His fervor in praying was so great that he stamped on the floor with both feet. But one foot was lame. Once when the Zaddik's wife was watching Hayyim pray, she went to her husband and said: "What a heartless person you are! Why do you let him pound the floor with his bad foot? Tell him to use only his good foot."
>
> "I could do that right enough," answered the Zaddik, "if in praying, he knew every time whether he was using his good or his bad foot."[37]

Another variation of the same tale describes how the Rabbi's fervor not only suspends his lameness, but permanently heals it.[38] The powerful wholeness of a man's kavanah communicates wholeness into his body. In fact, if a Zaddik's kavanah were perfect, his prayerful work or deed would redeem (make whole) the entire world.

> Rabbi Moshe once said: "If I knew I had said 'Amen,' just once in the way it ought to be said, I should have nothing to worry me."[39]

To this the Baal Shem comments:

> Man should reflect before prayer that he is ready to die in this prayer for the sake of its intention. It is a great mercy of God that man lives after prayer. For according to the way of nature, he must die because all his strength is in it; for he has devoted his strength in prayer for the sake of the good intention.[40]

Just as Christ, in the Gospel parables, praises the unjust steward, so the Hasid relates many tales about thieves and little children. Although the former are immoral and the latter amoral, each demonstrates an intensity of concentration that cannot but be admired. Further, both bind intention and deed into a single reality. It is their kavanah that the Hasid finds so praiseworthy.

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[36] Ibid.

[37] TH 2, 208.

[38] TH 2, 90.

[39] TH 2, 172.

[40] HMM, 202.

> Every lock has its key which fits into and opens it. But there are strong thieves who know how to open locks without keys. They break the lock. So every mystery in the world can be unriddled by the particular kind of mediation fitted to it. But God loves the thief who breaks the lock open: I mean, the man who breaks his heart for God.[41]

Buber relates a lengthy tale of a small boy who attended the Day of Atonement service and was so filled with fervor at the climax of the service that he pulled a whistle out of his pocket and blew it with all his might. "All stood startled and bewildered. But the Baal Shem raised himself above them and spoke, 'the judgment is suspended, and wrath is dispelled from the face of the earth.'"[42]

Kavanah is truly redemptive, especially for those who live in the presence of a Zaddik who has achieved it to a high degree.

> It is told of the dancing of one Zaddik, "his foot was as light as that of a four-year-old child." And among all who saw his holy dancing, there was not one in whom the holy turning was not accomplished, for in the hearts of all who saw, he worked both weeping and rapture in one.[43]

As a result of the act done with kavanah, holy joy results within and holy creation externalizes it without. In these two, the world is redeemed.[44] This redemptive work, infused with kavanah, comprises man's avoda, his service to God here on earth. Each man has his own way, his own unique service to perform, something not yet done by any other. Each must discover it in his own conscience, then "choose" it with all his heart.[45]

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[41] TR, 17.

[42] HMM, 93-4.

[43] HMM, 75.

When compared with Buber's philosophical thought, this pivotal attitude parallels that of I-Thou. Kavanah does not impose its image or its will on reality, but opens itself unrestrictively to reality. It does not seek to place some mark or produce some effect in the world, dealing with the world as object, but seeks to meet the world as subject. It seeks to be whole and, as a whole person, to embrace the depths of that which is over against it. In this embrace, both are redeemed.[46]

The man of kavanah is a man without sin, for as sin is directionless chaos, kavanah is total direction. Sin is that which is not and cannot be done by the whole person.[47] Kavanah, on the other hand, meets the world with the wholeness of the I-Thou.

> If we neglect this spiritual substance sent across our path, if we think only in terms of momentary purposes, without developing a genuine relationship to the beings and things in whose life we ought to take part, as they in ours, then we ourselves will be debarred from true full existence.[48]

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[44] HMM, 108.

[45] WM, 15-6.

[46] HMM, 98.

[47] OMH, 86.

[48] WM, 39.

Quite the contrary, as one who fears God, the man of kavanah stands naked before God [illegible] world in joy and truth, seeking to touch, by hallowing relationship, her beauty and joy. "Rejoicing in the world, if we hallow it with our whole being, leads to rejoicing in God."[49] Such kavanah in the Hasid enables him to envision the meaning of life.

> The soul of him who longs very much for a woman and regards her many-colored garments is not turned to its gorgeous material and its colors but to the splendor of the longed-for woman who is clothed in it. But the others see only the garment and no more.[50]

Where One Stands

"Where one stands" stresses once again the emphatic world-affirming mentality of Hasidism. "If a man of Israel has himself firmly in hand, and stands solidly on the earth, then his head reaches up to heaven."[51] Typical of the genre of the legends which turn an abstract question of impersonal curiosity into a word of God, addressing the hearer in his here and now, is the gendarme who wonders why God asked Adam, "Where are you?", and hears God ask him, here and now, "Where are you?"[52]

> No encounter with a being or a thing in the course of our life lacks a hidden significance. The people we live with or meet with, the animals that help us with our farm work, the soil we till, the materials we shape, the tools we use, they all contain a mysterious spiritual substance which depends on us for helping it towards its pure form, its perfection.[53]

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[49] WM, 19.

[50] HMM, 82.

[51] TR, 40.

[52] WM, 11.

[53] WM, 38.

Any act, even the most profane bodily act, done with _kavanah_, raises the sparks. Life is seen as an unbroken series of meetings, each crying out to the Hasid for redemption, just by him and just in this hour. "Here stands the life of the everyday."[54] _The Way of Man_ relates a long legend of a man who, after a dream, sets off to a far region in search of a hidden treasure. Coming to the spot indicated by his dream, he meets another who also had dreamt of a hidden treasure, and indicated its location to be in the man's own home, under his stove. He returns home and finds his treasure there, right where he lived.[55]

When a disciple was asked what had been the most essential matter for his late Zaddik, he replied: "Always just what he was engaged in at the moment."[56]

> God says to man as he said to Moses: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet"--put off the habitual which encloses your foot and you will recognize that the place on which you happen to be standing at this moment is holy ground. For there is no rung of being on which we cannot find the holiness of God everywhere and at all times.[57]

The Hasid feels himself addressed by God in every hour, calling from him a genuine decision. His decision, in the first instance, touches only his own behavior, but, in so acting, he participates in determining the next hour, "and through this, upon what the future generation will be like."[58] He cannot pass to another situation as more suitable, for the first will ask why he would not redeem it. If it was unsuitable, that is, evil, then all the more reason for him to redeem it. But even more, the here and now has a secret destination we are unaware of.[59]

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[54] _OMH_, 86.

[55] _WM_, 36.

[56] _OMH_, 52.

[57] _TR_, 15.

[58] _OJ_, 219.

> [illegible] that this is not done, is the reason why the coming of the Messiah is delayed. Every man's foremost task is the actualization of his unique, unprecedented and never-recurring potentialities, and not the repetition of something that another, and be it even the greatest has already achieved.[60]

A popular dictum was attributed to Rabbi Zusza shortly before his death: "In the world to come I shall not be asked: 'Why were you not Moses?' I shall be asked: 'Why were you not Zusza?'"[61]

Through this primacy of the here and now, the division between the sacred and profane is relativized and redefined. The Nikolsburger Rabbi was shocked when the Berditsher, attired in his sacred shawl and phylacteries, went into the kitchen to sample the food under preparation--and when later, in the house of prayer, he entered into a business conversation. Everything to him was sacred; yet everything needed to be hallowed.[62] This teaching is even more beautifully expressed in this legend:

> On the eve of the Day of Atonement, when the time had come to say Kol Nidre, all the hasidim were gathered together in the House of Prayer waiting for the Rabbi. But time passed and he did not come. Then one of the women of the congregation said to herself: "I guess it will be quite a while before they begin, and I was in such a hurry and my child is alone in the house. I'll just run home and look after it to make sure it hasn't awakened. I can be back in a few minutes."
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> She ran home and listened at the door. Everything was

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[59] _HMM_, 102.

[60] _WM_, 16.

[61] _WM_, 17.

[62] _OMH_, 135.

> quiet. Softly she turned the knob and put her head into the room--and there stood the Rabbi holding her child in his arms. He had heard the child crying on his way to the House of Prayer, [illegible] had prayed with it and sung to it until it fell asleep.[63]

Teshuvah

The _teshuvah_ or turning, Will Herberg notes, is of crucial importance to the religious thinking of Martin Buber.[64] It is a human fact and a world-embracing power. When God created the world, He saw that it had no stability. "He then created the turning and the world had stability."[65] From this fact, no matter how far the world strays from God, the deliverance is always open to it.

The Hasidic turning is similar to the Christian conversion (metanoia) but with basic distinctions. The Christian converts from one object of faith to another while the Hasid turns from one point of view to an uncommitted openness of the Thou without categorical definition. Further, conversion involves repentance and atonement for the past while turning simply leaves the past and gives total attention to the reality toward which he is now facing.[66]

Turning is decision in its ultimate intensification. It is a personal revolution in the midst of a course of mediocre existence. "In the midst of 'sin,' that is, in decisionlessness, the will to decision awakens, the cover of routine life bursts open, and the primal forces break through, storming heavenward."[67] It is both capable of [illegible] within and [illegible]ing the world about him.[68] No matter how much power a man has, he is way-less without decision.[69] Turning is the critical choice, responsive to a meeting with God, that makes his life a way.

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[63] _TH 2_, 87.

[64] _Writings of Martin Buber_, 28-9.

[65] _IW_, 20.

[66] M. Friedman, _Life_, 133-4.

Though the world awaits and depends upon man's turning,[70] he is quite capable of "putting it off," that is, hiding from God. He can elect for the second type of evil, forming an absolute image of self and of reality, closing off relationship and world, the sole mode of God's communication.

He can master each situation by approaching it with a preconceived technique and formulated outlook. Or he can approach each unique situation with a once-and-for-all attitude that closes to his eyes the "ever-anew."[71]

> He who is all evil can be cured of his infirmity when he wakens to the Turning, and turns to God with a whole heart and begs him to point the way to the light. But [he] . . . who has not the possibility of recognizing the greatness of his Creator and the true nature of service because, in his own eyes, he is righteous--how can he turn?[72]

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[67] OJ, 67.

[68] WM, 32.

[69] TR, 93.

[70] FSH, 246; HMM, 189.

[71] BMM, 16.

[72] TR, 102-3.

Turning does not simply mean that a man who was formerly closed to God or trapped in a mire of waylessness, and now turns and reopens himself, there is also an essential element of crisis involved. Turning involves a situation of almost total depersonalization, "where there is not advance and no retreat, but only utterly new turning--breakthrough."[73] It is a moment when a man, who until then had completely given his life over to the domination of the lifeless mechanism of world process, now breaks through with his whole being and meets the Thou as he has never "known" Him before. In this moment redemption advances to a point never before achieved. For this reason, urgency cries out for "turning" now!

> Turn, turn, turn quickly in the turning, for the time is short and there is no longer any leisure for further wanderings of the soul, for redemption is now.[74]

Yihud

When speaking of Unification (Yihud) as the goal of the Hasidic life, we are not thinking primarily of the unification of the soul. The unification of the soul is the beginning of the Unification, and parallel to it in operation. But as a much larger concept, Unification refers to the entire redemptive process of the world, and even the unification of the transcendent God with His exiled Shekinah dwelling among us.[75]

This goal of Unification is the motif that predominates in the mind of the Hasid, enveloping all others. It is the motivating force and sole rationale for all his redemptive activity. It is founded on the conviction that the apparent duality of life--the En-Sof and the Shekinah, sacred and profane, good and evil, eternal and present moment--have an essential unity. This conviction further maintains that the over-arching potential unity of these differences is, at this moment, in a process of being realized into a cosmic wholeness.

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[73] IT, 56.

[74] Interpreting Hasidism, 121.

[75] HMM, 80.

> The other nations, too, believe that there are two worlds. They, too, say, "in the world to come." The difference is this: they think that the two are separate and severed, but Israel professes that the two worlds are essentially one and shall, indeed, become one.[76]

Essential to the Unification concept, according to Buber, is that its process not destroy the essential qualities of either pole. Relation will not cease to exist. Nor will "world" be "spiritualized" out of its concrete presentness.[77]

The limiting condition of unification is man. Since the "beginning" rests on him, all movement depends on his perception and conscious involvement in this great movement.

> If you do not believe that the reality of God is in all things, and you can by means of everything that is in the world achieve unifications, with all work and business and eating and drinking, but you do not believe and do not do it, and you regard it as evil and flee from it, then is there necessarily . . . "nothing," for the "work and calculation and cleverness" that thou hast "are in the netherworld to which thou goest."[78]

The dying words of the holy Yehudi, "the only one to declare thy oneness," referred to his deep devotion to the Shekinah and his overall work of unification. He refused to accept the permanent dichotomy of God and world, or a redemption of all, including evil.[79]

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[76] TR, 37.

[77] OMH, 85.

[78] OMH, 86.

Even though this is the fundamental meaning and movement of the world, and the life-service of man, it involves great risk. The man who "turns" must venture out into the uncalculated and unpremeditated, leaving security and the "well-trod-path" behind. Only because he meets the discontinuous reality unguarded and in complete trust, is he able to redeem it. But to open oneself to the primordial depths and let come what may--this is risk!

The venture is not only frightening, but dangerous. One could lose his footing and be swept up by the very whirlpool of confusion he had hoped to redeem. This very thing happens if his inner direction has not firmly embodied all his own passion and he has entered the work of unification divided. In this light, Hasidism distinguishes between the work of the ordinary man and that of the perfect man.[80] The first, including "even the least of persons," is called to raise the lost sparks that lie hidden in the natural world of ordinary things--tools, food, sleep, business, etc. But it is only the perfect man, strong in intention, who should venture to redeem those persons or objects in which the evil urge is powerful but directionless.[81]

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[79] M. Friedman, Life, 157; FSH, 285.

[80] See am-haartz and the perfect man, chapter 8, p. 208 ff.

The greatest threat to the work of unification, however, does not come from the evil urges, but from man's security-loving compromise of "religion." Here, where unification should be most clearly perceived and intensely engaged in, man tends to reject the hallowing of the everyday and replace it with clear, schematized goals and infallible techniques. Risk is eliminated; it is replaced by the security of gnosis and magic.[82] The Hasidic response is clear: there can be no device, no schema of teaching to hasten the end, only the hallowing of the everyday. "Only out of the redemption of the everyday does the All-Day of redemption grow.[83]

This historic contention between the faithful followers of risk and the security-bound gnostics makes its way through history to the present day. A clearer study of this notion will be presented in chapter nine. Here it is sufficient to note that Buber sees it epitomized in the contention between Moses and Korah, develops it between Jesus and Paul, and makes it the basis of his study between the Holy Yehudi and the Seer of Lublin. "The Yehudi, in contrast, is like Moses in his recognition that the people are not holy but must become so."[84]

Buber concludes that the "Seer" of the world will be redeemed on the day he will be willing to subject himself to the soul of the "Yehudi." However, as typical of world history, the Seer in For the Sake of Heaven realizes his blindness only after his own manipulations have destroyed the Yehudi and it is too late.[85]

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[81] HMM, 103. [82] OMH, 123. [83] OMH, 107.

[84] M. Friedman, Life, 157.

Unification does not represent an overcoming of the contradictions of life, but an embrace of these contradictions.[86] It is the patient process of alternation toward full realization. Abstracting and over-simplifying the process, we see man first realizing a tentative inner unification. He establishes a clear image of himself and of the world. Next occurs a turning from his full acceptance of his established image of the world to a genuine meeting of it with all his kavanah and directed power.

As a result of this meeting, new unification is effected in the world. But also, the world has spoken some truth of life to the individual which, up until now, he had not yet realized. He returns within, confronts his own inaccurate, limited image with this new realization, and arrives at a deeper self-unification and a more intense direction and kavanah. And so the process continues.

Some of the aspects of this process are described in the tale of the "checkers game."

> On one of the days of the Hanukkah feast, Rabbi Nahum, the son of the Rabbi of Rishyn, entered the House of Study at a time when he was not expected, and found his disciples playing checkers, as was the custom on those days. When they saw the Zaddik they were embarrassed and stopped playing. But he gave them a kindly nod and asked: "Do you know

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[85] WM, 34.

[86] Friedman, loc. cit.

> the rules of the game of checkers?" And when they did not reply for shyness he himself gave the answer: "I shall tell you the rules of the game of checkers. The first is that one must not make two moves at once. The second is that one may only move forward and not backward. And the third is that when one has reached the last row, one may move wherever one likes."[87]

When the goal has been reached, one will be free to move wherever he wishes. But until then, it is one step at a time in this one direction only. It is a gradual process, incomplete until the Shekinah has been restored to her Spouse. A legend speaks of a prince who allows the meal to begin only when the last of the guests has entered.[88]

> The exiled Shekinah wanders endlessly, separated from her "Lord," . . . a woman who weeps and laments over the husband of her youth.[89]

Letting God In!

Once Rabbi Pinhas was told of the great misery of the human race. Sunk in grief, he listened, then he raised his head. "Let us," he cried, "draw God into the world and all will be stilled."[90]

Here, Buber contends, Judaism differs from other religions and Hasidism most fully expresses this difference. What at first may sound like "presumptive activism," is a profound concept of divine grace. "God wants to dwell in the world, but only when the world wants to let Him in."[91]

True, God is already in the world, but as the hidden and unrealized Shekinah. There are the two worlds, but they are essentially one and becoming one.[92] This task of realizing God is the service of man in the world (avodah), the purpose for which he was created.

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[87] WM, 24-5.

[88] HMM, 101.

[89] HMM, 81.

[90] HMM, 34.

[91] HMM, 35.

> To "realize God" means to prepare the world for God, as a place for His reality--to help the world become God-real (gottwirklich); it means in other and sacred words, to make reality one. This is our service in the Kingdom's becoming.[93]

This coming closer is not merely a subjective, mental knowing, but an essential, ontological realizing through meeting. This is not to say that God is becoming. God is, the Absolute Person, the Eternal Thou.[94] It is we who are becoming. As Rabbi Bunam said late in life: "One does not go to the Messiah; one comes to him."[95]

Our image of Him is becoming, as a result of repeated meetings and subsequent orientations. But more, we are becoming as a result of our meeting--and the world is becoming, the unity is being realized by our holy living in relationship to the world in which we have been set, at the place where we stand.[96]

All men are at least dimly aware of this, their human task. "All men are at some time, no matter how fleetingly, aware of an encounter with God."[97] The Hasid was enduringly aware of it.

> "Where is the dwelling of God" asked the Rabbi of Kotzk.
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> "What a thing to ask! Is not the whole world full of His glory?" they responded laughing.

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[92] WM, 39-40.

[93] OJ, 9.

[94] IT, 82.

[95] FSH, 291.

[96] WM, 40.

[97] OJ, 9.

Then he answered his own question: "God dwells wherever man lets him in."[98]

The hallowing of the world is this "letting-in."

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[98] WM, 40-41; HMM, 30, 35.

CHAPTER VIII

COMMUNITY: DIALECTIC AFFIRMATION IN THE CONCRETE

A "living-tradition"[1] can be described and analyzed without communicating its reality. Just as the life of an animal cannot be circumscribed by a careful and correct dissection of each of its entrails, so Buber's concept of "world" is not necessarily communicated by an analytical dissection of each of its components. Buber's "world" is not system or theory, but a living way.[2]

Never was this "life" more evident, nor the dynamics of its affirmation of world more observable than in its concrete realization, the Hasidic community. Here is not commentary on "life," but the "life" itself. If chapters six through nine are considered to be four variations on the theme of dialectic affirmation, this one should serve to communicate to the reader the human implications of the Hasidic "world" vision.

Sacramentalized Legend

The Baal Shem Tov is one of those unique religious leaders whose "word" to the world arose, not from a teaching, but from a personal way of life. "These men did not proceed from a teaching, but moved to a teaching, in such a way that their life worked as a teaching, as a teaching not yet grasped in words."[3] Like Christ, the Baal Shem Tov left no writings, nor even theoretical doctrine, but rather a mode of life that worked to form a community.

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[1] "Seins-tradition." See G. Schaeder, Hebräischer Humanismus, Martin Buber, 244.

[2] OMH, 24.

Nor is the way of life of each of these religious leaders original and distinct from all others. Rather each is a reflection of a religious reality--a meaning of existence--that takes place between each man and God, "that is in the reality of their relationship, the mutual reality of God and man."[4] And out of this relationship "arises the single and inderivable, the unique reality of the world concretum presented me by God: the continual creation in each moment."[5]

These leaders, then, manifest in their own lives, this basic meaning of all life, in a uniquely high degree of fulfillment, and in an undefined, experiential form. But as the "life" expanded into the community, it pressed for a conceptual expression and sought a theological justification.[6]

Man in his penchant for stability and security, seeks to corporalize the "life" in word as well as in person. He will first, according to Buber, want to "justify" his new understanding in some already accepted theological system. For these reasons, Hasidism reached back and made a selection of the popular Judaic traditions, especially of the Talmud, and the Kabbalah.[7] And so long as these traditions reflected this "life," and not their own abstractions, they had value.

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[3] OMH, 25.

[4] OJ, 4.

[5] ABH, 132. Cf. above, "doctrine and life," chapter 5, 128.

[6] OMH, 24.

A deeper corporalization of "life" is myth. This is quite the opposite of teaching the human technique that clothes "life" in past tradition. Myth is not an allegory wilfully invented by man, but one impressed into him. It does not originate within an individual, but occurs on that plane that is open to the other in meeting: the "in between" man and man.[8] It is not a picture representation of an earlier truth--a metaphor--but memory, vision, and authentic record of God's revelation. Myth embodies and bears the divine presence within the event into the present, renewing the encounter between man and God in the here and now.[9]

Myth, as bearer of "life," is superior to teaching for it is far more faithful to life than abstracted theory. Teaching offers only an image of God recalled from a past meeting; it is a third person "It." Myth embodies the meeting itself and bears

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[7] Ibid. Also, M. Beek and S. Weiland, Martin Buber, 44.

[8] OJ, 7.

[9] M. Buber, "Myth in Judaism," Commentary, 9 (1950), 565.

God as a second person "Thou," present and speaking.[10] Conceptual truth cannot be refined out of and expressed apart from the myth because myth, so wedded to "life," is too indefinable, too beyond possession. Teaching can renew myth by bearing it into the present, but it can never replace it.[11]

This is the intent of Buber's response, given when asked why he didn't present his religious "life" concept outside of the format of Hasidism. His response, "I must remain in the doorstep of my ancestral home," was necessary because speculative theory could not bear the "life," separate from Hasidic or biblical myth.

Myth can become corrupt, that is, men can come to hear only its surface imagery, and not perceive the spirit within, nor meet the Thou, present and addressing the hearer. But it also can be freed and restored as the Kabbalah myth was restored by Hasidism from its gnostic interpretation.

> All of these "Thou's" which have been changed into "It's" have in their nature to change back again into presentness. But this fulfillment of this nature is thwarted by the man who has come to terms with the world of It. Instead of freeing, he suppresses; instead of looking, he observes; instead of accepting, he turns to account.[12]

Legends, especially the Hasidic legends, have been described by Buber as "dialogical myths," or the myth form of the "I and Thou."[13] In Hasidism, not only was "life" borne by the leader, and through him expanded into the community, but this

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[10] OJ, 6. Myth is to teaching what sacramental symbol is to sign symbol. See chapter 6, "Pansacramentalism." Frequently, the teaching suffers the same fate as does the cultic sacramental.

[11] HMM, 41. [12] IT, 39. [13] AF, 33.

"life" then continued to be engendered in the dialogue that took place between leader and community. The presence-bearing image or memory of this dialogue is the Hasidic legend.[14]

Legend is particularly important because: (1) it embodies the "life-force" of Hasidism; (2) of the three elements of Hasidism--leader, community, and legend--only legend survives today,[15] and (3) legend was integral to leader (zaddik) and community. Not only did it embody their interpersonal bond of everyday life, but it also formed a dynamic element of their worship. The legend formed an integral part and performed a sacramental role in the Third Meal of the Sabbath celebration.[16]

One would have to agree with Martinus Beek that:

> it cannot be said that the legends . . . result in literature that is easily read. Rather than read them casually, it would be better not to read them at all. They need to be read over and over again and given constant thought and attention.[17]

But this is because the legend is not a teaching that conveys its message literally, but through myth. For whatever events, miracles, or rabbinical tales the legend relates, the reader must remember that the event is being elevated to express the basic meaning of existence as it impels this community.[18]

The legends are not didactical nor do they conclude with an applied moral, but each is a "life-event" that speaks for itself. In fact, this event not only embodied the "life-meaning" in the past, but retains a sacramental quality of bearing "life," and out of it, redemption, into the present.

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[14] M. Buber, Jewish Mysticism, xxiii.

[15] OMH, 27.

[16] TH 1, v.

[17] M. Beek and S. Weiland, Martin Buber, 43.

[18] OMH, 28; M. Beek and S. Weiland, op. cit., 45.

The very recollection and renewed narration of the legend re-presents, here and now, the "life" and its power. This renewed presence of "life" is not effected in an "ex opere operato" sense, but out of its ability to renew the dialogical, leader-community situation centered on the true meaning of existence.

> This storytelling is an event marked with the solemnity of a sacred rite. [As the stories are told] the marvels performed by the Zaddik become a reality once again, as the power of their words and of their actions were spread abroad.[19]

The legend of the lame Zaddik exemplifies this sacramental power. At the Third Meal, he related to the community the holy joy of the Baal Shem Tov. Though lame in one leg, his enthusiasm--sparked by the tale--caused him to dance about the room with a lightness of foot that few had ever witnessed even in a young, healthy man. "The story must be told in such a way that it constitutes help in itself."[20]

This sacramental power of the legend could not be better expressed than in the Hasidic legend related by the great Hebrew novelist, S. J. Agnon, and recorded by G. Scholem:

> When the Baal Shem had a difficult task before him, he would go to a certain place in the woods, light a fire and

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[19] Ibid.

[20] TH 1, vi.

> meditate in prayer--and what he had set out to perform was done.
>
> When a generation later the "Maggid" of Meseritz was faced with the same task he would go to the same place in the woods and say: We can no longer light the fire, but we can still speak the prayers--and what he wanted done became reality.
>
> Again, a generation later, Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassor had to perform this task. And he too went into woods and said: We can no longer light the fire, nor do we know the secret meditation belonging to the prayer, but we do know the place in the woods to which it all belongs--and that must be sufficient; and sufficient it was.
>
> But when another generation has passed, and Rabbi Israel of Rishin was called upon to perform the task, he sat down on his golden chair in his castle and said: We cannot light the fire, we cannot speak the prayers, we do not know the place, but we can tell the story of how it was done. And, the storyteller adds, the story which he told had the same effect as the actions of the other three.[21]

We see Hasidism first, then, as a way that seeks the primal meaning of existence of man and world. Its goal and method are not in the category of intellectual knowledge or spiritual understanding, but in the category of life and deed--"Erlebnis," life-experience. To those willing to read the legends in this "life" sense, these myths of dialogue unfold the life-experience of the Hasidim. This wisdom is not the reflection of an individual but the "in-between" of a living community dialogue. The next logical step is to go beyond the myth form itself and observe the "between" of the community: first, the individual of the community, and then, the individual-community relationship.

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[21] G. Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, 349-50.

The Am-Haartz and the Zaddik

Although he was tempted to do so, Buber did not establish essentially different classes of men, giving "fixed and primal exclusive properties"[22] to each.

> I can only imagine a creative man as one in whom that genuine iron ore that every, even the most miserable, human soul conceals becomes steel at red and then at white heat; only one in whom the spirit that is common to all fulfills itself unchecked in effective consequence.[23]

All men are called to become, to enter into relationship with world and the Eternal. In so doing, they realize their own humanness. However, no one responds in an absolute sense, for "a purely realizing man would disappear in God";[24] all are relative in a more or less realized humanness. But within this area of relative awareness, men, possibly even the majority of men, are rather closed to dialogue and growth.

> Ulrich: Do you not think, too, Daniel, that those of whom you speak are few in our time?
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> Daniel: Realizing men are few in our time. It is busy replacing them by the producers.
>
> Ulrich: The producers? Whom do you call by this name?
>
> Daniel: Those who work without being, who give what they do not possess, who triumph where they have not fought: the pet children of appearance. They shun realization from of old or have renounced it when they took leave of their youth.[25]

Among the "realizers" Buber sensed two different orientations. Reverting to Hasidic terminology, he called them the am-haartz and the zaddik.

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[22] D, 70.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] D, 73.

The am-haartz are simple men who trust God completely and meet him in the world with unperturbed souls. Each lives his life simply and directly; he does not reflect on the past in brooding or self-satisfied spirit.

> Whenever opportunity offers itself to him, he accomplishes with unperturbed soul the good that is entrusted to him in such a manner as if he had known it from all eternity. But if he should go astray sometime, he seeks the way out with strong strides and casts his lot on God.[26]

The personality of the simple man can be compared to the child or primitive of Buber's dialogical philosophy. He knows the Thou and is immediately open to it. He has not yet reflected within himself, not yet stepped back and regarded the world as an It. Therefore, he has not yet acquired distance and reentered relation. The totality of his life is full, open relation prior to distance.

In Hasidism, the simple man is of the highest importance and dignity. His kavanah is the singular virtue of high honor. He is not regarded as ignorant or passive, as he would have been by the scholars of the complex Kabbalah or the esoteric rabbinical society, but as fully active in the service (Avoda) of hallowing the everyday.[27]

> It is told of a great sufferer, prayer, and music-lover among the Hasidim, Rabbi Israel of Kosmitz, that he was especially pleased when the "simple people" came to him; when his disciples asked him the reason for this, he said to them,

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[26] OMH, 46-7.

[27] OMH, 48.

"I--all my effort and work is directed toward becoming simple, and they are simple already."[28]

The recognition of the am-haartz as full members of the community with equal religious rights was a change of the greatest importance in Hasidism because it destroyed the caste-hierarchical form of religious society. Just as Hasidism overcame the "sacred" and "adiaphora" hierarchy of action, so also it overcame the traditional hierarchy of persons.[29]

The Zaddik, the perfect man, stands at the center of Buber's attention. Again, he is not someone essentially different from other men, but the most intense unfolding of the humanness lying hidden in every human being. Unlike the simple man, the Zaddik has stepped back from reality and considered it as an object. With this acquired distance, he is then able to reenter relation with full mutuality. His overriding concern is to integrate himself to the point where he reacquires the full trust and openness of the "Thou" of the world--the distinguishing mark of the simple man. The Zaddik is the concrete realization of the human. It is he who calls all to become their human selves. He is both model and means.

Recall Buber's deep impression when, as a young boy, he first observed the Zaddik of Sadagora: "When I saw the Rebbe striding through the rows of the waiting, I felt 'leader.'"[30] "The world needs the perfected man and . . . the perfected man is none other than the true helper."[31]

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[28] OMH, 47.

[29] OMH, 52.

[30] AF, 20.

> As a child I had received an image of the Zaddik and through the sullied reality had glimpsed the pure idea, the idea of the genuine leader of a genuine community. Between youth and manhood this idea had arisen in me through knowledge of Hasidic teaching as that of the perfected man who realizes God in the world.[32]

He says:

> I recognized the idea of the perfect man. At the same time I became aware of the summons to proclaim it to the world.[33]

Historic Situation

In the person of the Hasidic Zaddik, Buber discusses and discloses to us the essential "human." He begins by describing the historic need that produced this concrete manifestation. The Jews of Central Europe were suffering under religious forms that were almost devoid of humanizing force. Esoteric doctrine, rigid ritual and especially burdensome and incomprehensible law left them almost dehydrated of the "refreshing water of spirit."[34]

Sabbatainism, a false response to the crisis, terminated in catastrophe with the re-establishment of all these burdens, reinforced and more repressive than ever before. This acute crisis resulted in a greater need for new leadership. The rabbinical leaders, committed to preserving both doctrine and system, were incapable of leading a renewal. So insensitive to the very crisis they fostered, they not only could not alleviate the problem, but aggravated it by their every effort. Only a "counter-leadership" could truly respond.[35]

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[31] Ibid.

[32] AF, 22.

[33] HMM, 59.

[34] OMH, 35-6.

The Baal Shem Tov answered the call of his age. His response was not in the order of new, counter-teaching, but in the order of healing.

> The evil must become checked before it becomes invincible. But this cannot take place through battle, but only through mediation and a new leading.[36]

"Healing" becomes the key word--a healing of the separation of the people from their spiritual roots, but especially a healing of the separation of God and world. The kabbalah teaching had hinted that man was in a special manner one with God. But to this teaching, Hasidism added an emphasis on a mediator between God and community who would serve as the leader of the community.

Even more characteristic of Hasidism was the shift of emphasis from scholarship and knowledge as the center of concern to service as the new center.

> This service is one of the strongest fusions of intercourse with God and man that is known to the history of religions: one serves God through helping his creatures, one helps the creatures through leading them to God, and this leading does not go beyond life but right through it.[37]

As the new leader emerged in Hasidism, he immediately became part of the Hasidic dialectic. Buber observes two distinct types of Zaddikim.

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[35] OMH, 41.

[36] OMH, 36.

[37] OMH, 42.

> Among the great zaddikim there are clearly two kinds to be distinguished: the zaddik who is essentially a teacher and whose decisive effect is on his disciples and the zaddik who is essentially a helper and whose decisive effect is on the broad circle of his Hasidim. That is no secondary distinction but one in which the inner dialectic finds expression: the first kind belongs more to the side of the spiritualizing, the second more to the other, that of realizing.[38]

The "teacher" Zaddik was an authoritarian figure who gave his students his truth to be accepted, and formed them in their religious life according to his own image. He was their model of holiness. He sat as one above them, in full control of his disciples on whom he centered his attention.

The "helper" Zaddik, with whom Buber identifies the real "helper," was democratic in orientation. He concentrated his attention on the larger community and engaged in continual dialogue with the members of the community. He sat on the same level as his people, sharing his understanding with them and learning from them. He sought to help and strengthen them when their courage was weak, but never assumed responsibility if they were capable of bearing the weight of their own lives. He sought to help each become himself, and discouraged any imitation of his own style of life--describing it as "grasping another's rung."[39] He led not by his external position of authority, but almost exclusively by his internal unity and by his vision of being.

This helper Zaddik was the key to the communal relationship of Hasidism. When this style of Zaddik gradually was replaced by the first, Hasidism inevitably decayed into Zaddikism.

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[38] Replies to My Critics, 738.

[39] TR, 50.

> Hasidism had to lose its renewing effect upon the people when it replaced with the mediation of the Zaddik, its former wonderous self-liberation, that immediate relationship to God in which man "reaches the root of all teaching and all commandment, God's 'I', the simple unity and boundlessness in which commandments and laws fold their wings," because he has risen above all of them through his unconditionality. To say of this basic view of religiosity that it is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit into the man who purifies and sanctifies himself is no exaggeration, but only the strongest way of expressing it.[40]

The Perfect Man

"The world needs him, the perfected man; it awaits him ever again."[41] What marks the holy man as "perfect"? How does he become perfect and why is the world awaiting him so anxiously? In answer to these questions, two points will be analyzed separately, although in the concrete, they are intensely integrated. The first addresses itself to the vision of world which the perfect man incorporates into his life; the second to the relational aspect of this vision. Fundamental to both points is the necessary context in which the perfect man finds himself vis-à-vis world and God.

> One must bear in mind the significance that is ascribed within the creation of the world to the creation of man and within the human race to the people of Israel and within Israel to the Zaddik.[42]

In the Hasidic analogy, the world as yet is not capable of consciously embracing the full glory of God. For this reason it lies hidden and exiled. But God does not cease looking for a recipient of his glory. [illegible] created man for this purpose, but man fell, forfeiting his honor. God then called Israel, but she, in turn, could not fully receive the glory. God waits, wanting Israel to become _zaddikim_ (recipients). "More than the calf wants to suck, the cow wants to suckle."[43]

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[40] OJ, 83.

[41] HMM, 69.

[42] OMH, 193.

Although never discontinuing the effort on His side, God appears to limit the showing forth of his glory.

> He acts, in so doing, like a father who, in order that his small son may learn to understand him more and more, and at last completely, begins by seemingly limiting his own understanding and making himself a child for the sake of the child.[44]

This is a pedagogical self-limitation, somewhat parallel to the _zimzum_ of the Lurian _kabbalah_.

God gradually succeeds. The Zaddik arises, generation by generation; he presses through the world, step by step. He receives God's light and enters into his own unity of being.

> As a man, the Zaddik is what every man as such is, _dam_, blood, but because he cleaves to Him who is _alufo-shel-olam_, the prince of the world, and the divine principle is thus united with his blood, there comes from the letter _aleph_ and the word _dam_ for the first time truly Adam: the true man, the receiver of the limitless light, has arrived.[45]

Each man gradually comes to see deeper and deeper within himself through experience. As his vision penetrates and expands, he beholds, and communicates to the world at large, more and more of the hidden reality of God's indwelling among man. Both the vision and the communication is creative; God becomes incarnate in the world in and through this man.

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[43] _OMH_, 193.

[44] _OMH_, 194.

[45] _Ibid_.

[illegible] this point in [illegible] Hasidism, Buber sees no need to stress the fact that the Zaddik, the archtype of man, understands the prime meaning of existence. It is the manner in which he possesses this vision, the how, that he cannot stress enough.[46]

> Thus truth in the world of man is not to be found as the content of knowledge, but only as human existence. One does not express it, one does not perceive it, but one lives it and receives it as life.[47]

It was neither sermons nor advice that the Polish Jew needed, but a man "to show one how to believe and how to say what was to be done."[48] And this could only be accomplished by the way the Zaddik lived. It is easy enough to pronounce teaching, but truth is authenticated only in life. "A man should heed that all his conduct be Torah and himself be a Torah."[49] There is a legend in which one Zaddik states that the wrapping and unwrapping of his girdle is the sacred act of winding and unwinding the Torah.[50] "Rabbi Mendal of Rymanov used to say that he had learned Torah from every limb of his teacher, Rabbi Elimilek."[51]

It would be a misunderstanding to see an anti-intellectualism here: but there is a stress on balance and priority of life. "It is dangerous to know too much Hasidut" because it might be that he knows more than he does.[52] Out of life comes teaching. The "vision" of "life-meaning" is not intellectual but existential,

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[46] OMH, 128.
[47] OMH, 229.
[48] OMH, 43.
[49] OMH, 128.
[50] OMH, 129.
[51] OMH, 229.
[52] OMH, 230.

"known" in one's relation with others and with the world. The Zaddik's conceptualization of this vision--to the degree that it occurs at all--is reflected from this life-experience and certainly is inferior to the life-experience itself. The concept, derived out of, and after, the real meeting, can never fully capture and express all its nuances and dimensions.

> [The Zaddik] is, according to the conception of him, the man in whom transcendental responsibility has grown from an event of consciousness into organic existence.[53]

The second point of development is how the Zaddik communicates this meaning of existence. If his possession of it has moved from the conceptual to the existential, then so must the same be said of his communication of it. The communication is much more a personality conviction, a "charism" than a point of information. The perfect man, in his meetings, communicates: (1) a conviction of understandable courage that can only come out of an interior "knowing"; and (2) an atmosphere of openness and trust of the "other" over-against him that is redemptive.

The communication is essentially relational. "The highest subject matter of legend is what passes between teacher and disciple."[54] This relationship is equal and open on both sides; both sides are affected. Buber relates a legend of Rabbi Bunam and his disciple, Enoch, a student terrified of speaking openly to his Zaddik. Bunam responds by explaining his own fears and weaknesses, and having put the disciple at ease, invites him to dine with him.[55]

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[53] OMH, 130-1.

[54] OMH, 231.

[55] OMH, 232.

Bunam's admission is not posed for psychological or pedagogical effect but is a personal and genuine relationship in which the Zaddik reveals his Thou to the disciple.[56] The relationship is always situated in an event shared in common in which the Zaddik is able to experience "from the other side" as well as on his own side.[57]

The Zaddik, from the wholeness of his own personhood, does not indoctrinate or invade the "inner sanctum" of his disciple,[58] nor does he remove responsibility from his shoulders, but meets him in a spirit of integrity, first elevating his disciple's apparent need to its true object, then showing him the way to fulfill it.[59]

A final characteristic is that the Zaddik concentrates his meeting to individuals. Buber is quite cautious about retaining the full meeting quality--a quality that can be mutually present only to a minimal degree when extended beyond a one-to-one basis.

> I do not mean the rulers and statesmen who have to determine the external destiny of great communities; their sphere of action is all-embracing, but, in order to be effective, they turn away from the individual, enormously threatened lives that glance at them with a thousand-fold question, to the general that appears to them unseeing. I mean those who withstand the thousandfold-questioning glance of individual lives, who give true answer to the trembling mouth of the needy creature who time after time demands from them decision.[60]

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[56] IT, 45.

[57] BMM, 96 f.

[58] TH 1, 5-6.

[59] OMH, 148; HMM, 69.

[60] HMM, 68.

Messiah

Buber confirms that Judaism possesses a "future tendency" Messianism: "the idea of an absolute future that transcends all reality of past and present as the true and perfect life."[61] In this messianism, there is no question of "if" or "when" it comes; every moment guarantees it. "Each human life that is unarbitrary and bound to the world [lets] a seed of redemption fall, and the harvest is God's."[62]

Hasidism categorically rejects any attempt to force this future. "There is no definite, exhibitable, teachable, magic action in established formulae and gestures, attitudes and tensions of the soul, that is effective for redemption; only the hallowing of all action."[63] But this work of unification must ever flow for "life" to be vital and for the future to come. It is control that is rejected; openness that is commended. A Hasidic legend illustrates this point:

> A departed spirit wanders in eternity from gate to gate, from power to power. But suddenly, unable to go on, he stops. Before him, he sees an old man who asks: "Why do you stand here?" "I cannot go on," the spirit answers. Whereupon the old man replies: "This is not a good thing. For if you linger here without going on and on, you may lose the life of the spirit, and remain in this place like a mute rock."[64]

In this context of "living toward" the end but not "forcing" it, the Baal Shem rejected any identity as an eschatological

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[61] OJ, 50.

[62] OMH, 112.

[63] OMH, 107.

[64] OJ, 53.

Messiah who hastens the end, and identifies himself as "helper."[65] In this role he acknowledges his responsibility as co-worker to make the beginning, but denies any self-differentiation or superiority over other men by assuming a messiah role. The true Zaddik is a hidden servant.[66]

Buber's Zaddik, especially the Yehudi, identifies with the Deutero-Isaiah's suffering servant of the Lord. This is neither the community of Israel personified, nor the person of the Messiah, but a single personality embodied in a series of different persons at different times. These men are those "that God sharpens to a polished arrow and then conceals in His quiver."[67] It is essential that they remain hidden, bearing out of their suffering a new covenant between the people of the earth and God.[68] Should the character of hiddenness be lost, not only would the work itself be suspended, but a counter-work would set in.[69]

> The Yehudi, then, stands in the succession of servants who voluntarily accept the sufferings of the exile. . . . Understood in this way, the tragic conflict between the Yehudi and the Seer is a part of that redemptive process whereby this very world with all its contradictions is hallowed and the kingdom of man transformed into the kingdom of God.[70]

In each of these servants, the Messiah is in the world at work now. In a diminished sense, every "zaddik" served this role.

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[65] OMH, 40. [66] OMH, 111. [67] OMH, 109.

[68] A. Cohen, Martin Buber, 67.

[69] OMH, 109. [70] M. Friedman, Life, 158.

This very multiplicity avoided a singularity of messiahship and the establishment of superiority of role.[71]

Jesus Himself is recognized as one of the suffering servants.[72] Buber calls Him his "great brother"[73] and frequently attests to his Jewish identity and devotio. This is not surprising since, as Buber explains:

> We Jews knew Jesus from within [the Jewish Community] in the impulses and stirrings of his Jewish being, in a way that remains inaccessible to the people submissive to him.[74]

However, the separation of Buber and Christianity begins when Jesus, for seemingly good reasons and without perceiving the disastrous effect, stepped out of the "hidden" role and proclaimed Himself Messiah. His action set into motion a whole series of auto-messiah, which eventually degenerated into Sabbatai-Zevi and Jacob Frank. This is the "counter-work" which Buber envisioned. Such proclaimed Messiahship cannot avoid a manipulation of the end.[75]

Buber totally rejects the "Christ" of Paul, John, and the Greek thinkers who replace the emunah faith in the person of Jesus with a gnostic, pistis, faith in dogma and ritual surrounding Christ.[76]

Community

Rabbi Yitzhak of Skvira, a grandson of Rabbi Nahum's

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[71] OMH, 44.

[72] PF, 155, 235.

[73] TTF, 12, 38.

[74] OMH, 251.

[75] OMH, 110.

[76] A. Cohen, Martin Buber, 69.

> told: In a small town, not far from Tchernobil, several hasidim of my grandfather's were seated together at the conclusion of the sabbath. They were all honest and devout men and at this meal of "the escort of the queen" they were casting the accounts of their souls. They were so humble and so full of the fear of God, that they thought they had sinned very greatly and agreed that there was no hope for them, and that their only consolation was that they were utterly devoted to the great zaddik Rabbi Nahum, and that he would uplift and redeem them. Then they decided that they must immediately go to their teacher.
>
> They started out right after the meal and together they went to Tchernobil. But at the end of that same sabbath, my grandfather was sitting in his house and casting the accounts of his soul. Then in his humility and fear of God, it seemed to him that he had sinned very greatly, and that there was no hope for him except one: that those hasidim, so earnest in the service of God, were so deeply devoted to him, and that they would now comfort him. He went to the door and gazed in the direction his disciples lived, and when he had stood there a while, he saw them coming.
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> At this instant--so Rabbi Yitzhak ended his story--two arcs fused to a ring.[77]

Just as distance is a prerequisite for relation, so realizing the unique perfection of the individual is the logical prerequisite for communal relationship. Yet just as "person" cannot come to be, and distance cannot be realized and developed, except in mutuality, so the wisdom of Hasidism and the realization of the perfect man cannot be appreciated except as community. Community stands "between" and above individuality.

"The fundamental fact of human existence, according to Buber's anthropology, is man with man . . . the sphere of the *zwischenmenschliche*.[78]

> The real God lets no shorter line reach him than each man's longest which is the line embracing the world that

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[77] *TH 1*, 172-3.

[78] M. Friedman, *Life*, 85.

> is accessible to this man. For He, real God, is the creator, and all beings stand before Him in relation to one another in his creation, becoming useful to one another for his creative purpose.[79]

There is no other way of salvation, redemption or unification except in the context of community.

Although always situated in the concrete, community is defined far more by freely responsive relationship than by specific dimensions. It refers both to the individual Zaddik and his followers, and to the total community of Israel. The former is the microcosmic realization of the latter.[80]

In studying the Zaddik and his followers, three concentric circles are observed by Buber. The largest circle consisted of individuals who came from afar to spend a few days "in the shadow of his holiness,"[81] especially to ask help for physical and spiritual illness.

A closer circle consisted of his congregation--those Jews within the neighborhood who acknowledged him as the leader of their souls and recognized in him the "presence of God." He was their Rebbe, noted for his fear of God and the fervor of his "service of the heart."[82] It should be noted that the communities of the Hasidim were never "established" by external criteria such as territory. A choice was always present, and only those who responded freely from within were found members of the community.

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[79] BMM, 171.

[80] OMH, 41.

[81] OMH, 142.

[82] OMH, 143.

The innermost circle was that of the Zaddik and his immediate disciples, many of whom lived in his own house. Here especially was the inner, mutual relationship.

It was the "life" that formed the community. As noted above, the Baal Shem was one of the singular religious leaders who--independent of prior doctrine--"lived" a way of life to such depth that he naturally formed around him "community." Out of the community came individuals who attached themselves in an intensive way to the Baal Shem as his disciples. In time, they too would leave their master and, as new Zaddikim, form their own communities. And the cycle continued, expanding with each generation. The new disciples were formed in the "life" of the master, each developing the "life" according to his own individuality.[83]

> Each leads an individual life, that, for his part forms community, therefore a life in the world and with the world, and one that, for its part, again gives birth, in spirit, to men of the same kind.
>
> These together form the core of the movement--the formation of community and the spiritual begetting of disciples who form communities and who therefore neither enter into seclusion nor break off the tradition.[84]

Within this framework, the relational life of the community unfolded. Buber offers various observations and analogies of its inner dynamics.

He sees the individual, before responding to the community, as a scattered spark in chaos. It is the personality of the Zaddik who turns the crowd, individual by individual, into community.[85] This is not to say the Zaddik and people have a one-way relationship.

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[83] OMH, 26.

[84] Ibid.

> The mass of the people is like the bearers of the Ark of the Covenant without whom it cannot move even though in truth it is it that bears its bearers.[86]

There is constant reciprocal action between the two. Not only are the disciples a source of wisdom and understanding to the Zaddik, but often also the "simple man" who asks advice: when talking to him, the Zaddik hears the word spoken to him out of his own mouth--a word of wisdom unknown to him until that very moment.[87]

Such reciprocity is beautifully exemplified by the Baal Shem's legend of the bird's nest:

> He said to them: "By going away and leaving me alone, you dealt me a painful separation. I shall tell you a parable.
>
> "You know that there are birds of passage who fly to warm countries in the autumn. Well, the people in one of those lands once saw a glorious many-colored bird in the midst of a flock which was journeying through the sky. The eyes of man had never seen a bird so beautiful. He alighted in the top of the tallest tree and nested in the leaves. When the king of the country heard of it, he bade them fetch down the bird with his nest. He ordered a number of men to make a ladder up the tree. One was to stand on the other's shoulders until it was possible to reach up high enough to take the nest. It took a long time to build this living ladder. Those who stood nearest the ground lost patience, shook themselves free, and everything collapsed.[88]

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[85] OMH, 45; BMM, 62.

[86] OMH, 45.

[87] OMH, 145.

[88] TH 1, 54.

This interdependency does not require a great leveling of wealth or power, but does require each to serve the other by what he is as well as by what he has. Rich stood beside poor; the simple man by the zaddik, the civic leader by the peasant.

> There is no separation within the human world between the high and the low; to each the highest is open, each life has its access to reality, each nature its eternal light, from each thing a way leads to God, and each way that leads to God is the way.[89]

The community did not seek to reshape or abnegate the realities of life, but found itself thoroughly within the world's context. This was not a brotherhood which formed a life order outside public life, but a community of families, including the Zaddik, all of whom retained their rank and responsibilities of public life and occupation. In fact, the Zaddik especially remained with the world, "and just this, his life in the world and with the world, belongs to the innermost core of his relation of faith."[90]

> The crucial religious experience of man does not take place in a sphere in which creative energy operates without contradiction, but in a sphere in which evil and good, despair and hope, the power of destruction and the power of rebirth, dwell side by side. The divine force which man actually encounters in life does not hover above the demonic, but penetrates it.[91]

Communal life deeply roots itself, in full basic trust, on the immediacy of all relationships. Common concerns are deliberated and decided in common. The invading "care" or unexpected "accident" or trivial detail become the lifeline of the community which responds in spontaneous common deeds of mutual service. These unselected, unexalted, simple realities that have not been chosen create true community.[92]

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[89] OMH, 149.

[90] OMH, 26.

[91] EG, 31.

Yet true community, Buber emphasizes, finds itself first by relating "with radial lines" to a Center. He is not referring here to the Zaddik, but to the addressing presence of the Eternal Thou, calling each to become. Whether he remains hidden or makes Himself manifest to the individual, it is the Absolute Person who gives the meaning of life and primarily forms community. Secondarily, but not as a subdivision, the social emerges, binding the periphery of the circle, one to another.[93]

Essential to this concept is the spontaneous nature of community, unconditioned and uncommitted to structural specifications. Any true religious community is a moment's answer to a moment's question, never a once-and-for-all establishment.[94]

In summary, community is not only the relational situation in which "the perfect man the world so much needs" comes to life, but it is also the situation in which redemption is engendered through the dialectic process and in which the world is fulfilled through affirmation. Ultimately, community is that relationship in which the Divine becomes realized between man and man.

> The Divine may come to life in an individual man, . . . but it attains its earthly fullness only where . . . individual beings open themselves to one another, disclose them-

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[92] ABH, 88-9. [93] IT, 115. [94] ABH, 88.

selves to one another, help one another; where immediacy is established between one human being and another; where the sublime stronghold of the individual is unbolted, and man breaks free to meet other men.[95]

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[95] OJ, 110.

CHAPTER IX

CONTEMPORARY WESTERN SOCIETY: DIALECTIC IN CRISIS

The Commission

Buber's involvement with Hasidism was never that of a scholar, expending his energies to clarify the movement as a particular historic phenomenon, nor that of a literateur seeking to enhance and re-present its beautiful legends. Rather, from the beginning, he sensed in Hasidism a vital truth, a religious truth, which he felt embodied the existential purpose for which man is on earth.

> I consider the truth of Hasidism vitally important for Jews, Christians and other men, and at this particular hour more important than ever before. For now is the hour when we are in danger of forgetting for what purpose we are on earth, and I know of no other teaching that reminds us of this so forcibly.[1]

He felt himself "commissioned" to perform the task of bearing the Hasidic message to a world in need, a task for which he considered himself "not unsuited."[2]

The Western world, according to Buber's diagnosis, suffers from extreme alienation. Kierkegaard and Nietzsche saw the problem a hundred years ago "shaking the very foundation of man as man."[3] Marx and Freud partially analyzed it; the former as an economic alienation between man and his production, the latter as a psychological alienation between man and his inner self. But these partial analyses, more symptomatic than fundamental, did not go to the core of the matter.

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[1] OMH, 22.

[2] HMM, 21-22.

[3] HMM, 38.

> We must take the injured wholeness of man upon us as a life burden in order to press beyond all that is merely symptomatic, and grasp the true sickness through which those motifs receive the force to work as they have worked.[4]

The true sickness is the radical separation of the profane and the sacred--the "world" and the "holy."

> Hasidism sets the simple truth that the wretchedness of our world is grounded in its resistance to the entrance of the holy into lived life. The spirit is not spun in the brain; it has been from all eternity, and life can receive it into human reality. A life that does not seek to realize what the living person, in the ground of his self-awareness, understands or glimpses as the right is not merely unworthy of the spirit; it is also unworthy of life.[5]

As a result, the holy, removed from the fullness of life, things, and actions, forms itself into a self-contained totality called the "sacred," "a concept empty of reality, and now of historical and ethnological significance."[6] Man no longer knows the "holy" face to face, but substitutes "the spiritual." The "spiritual" has full control within its own province; state, society, and world have no say in its affairs. Yet it must, on its side of the compromise, restrict itself to its own sphere and have no say in the rest of life--the "world." Not only is the split solidified, but the "Thou" of the holy is no longer encountered--on either side. This is the heart of the crisis.

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[4] _Ibid_.

[5] _HMM_, 40.

[6] _HMM_, 39.

> The thinking of our age knows how to speak about things and beings in an illuminating fashion, but the great insight that our relations to things and beings forms the marrow of our existence seems to have become alien to life.[7]

Hasidism speaks to this crisis in a special manner. Granted, Hasidism has never set foot in the world-at-large as Christianity has, nor was that ever its intention. "Because of its truth and because of the great need of this hour," Buber carried it into today's world "against its will."[8] In truth, the Hasidic community itself has since fallen into decay, but within it lay a "kernel of life capable of working on man even today."[9] This kernel of life "hid itself in Hasidism and would, or rather should, go out into the world."[10]

"From here comes an answer to the crisis of Western Man that has become fully manifest in our age."[11] Although the answer of Hasidism is only partial and is not given in the clearly defined terms of a schematized ideology, it does come out of "life." More than any other teaching, Hasidism has the power to help modern man see what he has forgotten--the purpose for which he is here on earth.[12]

Devotio and Gnosis

A dialectic has been observed between the "hallowing" or "realizing" theme and the "spiritualizing" theme. In his 1954 response to Rudolf Pannwitz's essay on Hasidism, "Christ, Hasidism,

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[7] HMM, 40.

[8] OMH, 22.

[9] OMH, 27.

[10] HMM, 22.

[11] HMM, 27.

[12] M. Friedman, "Editor's Introduction," OMH, 7.

Gnosis," Buber expands on his understanding of this dialectic. He sees it as basic to all religions.

> As often as religion has appeared once again in history, there was also in it a force that . . . diverted man from God. That it thereby enjoyed a great success was caused for the most part by the fact that it is far more comfortable to have to do with religion than to have to do with God, who sends one out of home and fatherland into restless wanderings.[13]

The polarities of the dialectic are expanded into the _devotio_ and the _gnosis_. _Devotio_ sums up the great qualities of both the simple man and the perfect man, combining _kavanah_ and service (_avoda_). He is the man who stands before God as Thou. He is always turned to God as the I standing over-against his Thou, addressing him in the practicalities of everyday life.

Gnosis describes the quality of I-It in religion. There is no unknowable mystery; all is clearly perceived and systemitized. He both knows and holds the Eternal without hesitation. God is no longer the addressing Thou, but a humanly created image of the previously experienced Thou. He is now a third person, an It, possessed in man's intellect.[14]

With _Gnosis_, and as part of its make-up, comes magic--the manipulation of the dominated mystery. With the intellectual possession of the Eternal by _Gnosis_, the magical control and use of this power inevitably follows.[15]

Devotio and _Gnosis_ stand in polarity, engaging in a continual dialectic called "religion." _Gnosis_ is the surer, more secure and more powerful. _Devotio_ is a poor competitor, but has great strength on the level of human existence.

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[13] _ABH_, 110. [14] _OMH_, 224. [15] _IW_, 22.

> The issue between the two is joined for the most on the plane of pure existence. Only at times, in moments of special danger, must it be joined in words.[16]

Religion, embracing these polarities, is a continuum, a life of faith. It constantly embraces the particularity of history, geography, biography--the entire human reality. The inner dialectic passes through the succeeding phases of "arbitration and settlements, transformation and returns."[17] Out of the dialectic, the continuum forms and ever again reforms itself, maintaining and growing through each cycle of reception, expulsion, reconciliation. This continuum can be more clearly explained by observing the inner dynamics of the dialectic.

First, the two remain always related, always in contention or even struggle, one against the other, each striving for supremacy over the other. Buber describes this as the continuing struggle between Moses and Korah, or the Yehudi and the Seer. The very dialectic is part of the continuing, unfolding movement toward redemption.

> Buber's portrayal of the tragic conflict between the Yehudi and the Seer clearly shows that his concept of the redemption of evil does not mean any easy overcoming of the contradictions of life. Instead it includes these contradictions and the tragedy arising from them as an integral part of the redemption.[18]

Secondly, both poles are essential to each other and to the dialectic. Just as "the purely realizing kind of man does not exist,"[19] and the I-Thou does not exist in a state of purity but only in the dialectic of I-It, so the man and religion of pure _devotio_ cannot exist, except in the context of _gnosis._ _Gnosis_ is the myth, the ritual, the code, the teaching in which _devotio_ subsists. It is the historical making present and manifestation of _devotio_.

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[16] OMH, 245. [17] OMH, 246.

[18] M. Friedman, Life, 15. (Italics mine.)

> Hasidism never wished to eliminate or quarrel with any piece of the Law, because there was nothing that could not be fulfilled if done with the right intention.[20]

And just as the absolute evil of I-It cannot be achieved in the face of the Eternal Thou, and the purely orientating man would degenerate into nothingness, so absolute _gnosis_--a complete suffocation of _devotio_--could never come to be in the face of God's address and His dependency on our response to achieve the unification (_Yihud_).

It cannot be conceived that either could exist without the other until the unification. At that time one will be fully redeemed, embraced and united within the other. Only in the final unification of the world will the dialectic be fulfilled and the continuum terminated.

> But an observer who is also concerned in his observing about the continuance of the reality of faith, because he trembles for it as for the single bridge over the chasm of being, may not, for the sake of historical consistency of the continuum, evade the full view of the primal antithesis between gnosis and devotio in its historical manifestations; for those hours and these have to do with each other.[21]

Each struggles for the supremacy over the other. On one hand, Buber claims that in Hasidism, _devotio_ absorbed and overcame gnosis. "This must happen ever again if the bridge over the chasm of being is not to fall in."[22] But he also conceded that "life" found it hard to maintain itself against symbol and law, and that Hasidism gradually gave way to the inertia and literalness of the system and finally declined into Orthodoxy.[23]

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[19] _D_, 70. [20] _OMH_, 127. [21] _OMH_, 246.

Religion is whole only when devotio is supreme, served faithfully by the teaching and ritual of gnosis.

> Yet I do not hold it to be central, but man and ever again man. Myth must authenticate itself in man and not man in myth. . . . What is evil is not the mythicization of reality that brings the inexpressible to speech, but the gnosticization of myth that tears it out of the historical-geographical ground in which it took root.[24]

We must be ever anxious to subordinate ourselves to the "life" in order that through us, it may become reality.[25]

Yet it is gnosis that always seeks to overwhelm and efface the dialectic. It lifts the issue out of the historical and biographical and abstracts it into the "spiritual."[26] Because of its appealing clarity, security, and control, gnosis easily tempts man to place the knowing system and surety of the "once-and-for-all" above, or in place of, openness to the Eternal and the uncertainty of the "ever-anew."

Down through history, the dialectic continues. The "life" of devotio corporalizes itself among men in teaching and rite. Gradually, security-searching man establishes these elements for their own sake, circumscribing the area of "life" and dictating to it. As "life" becomes strangled and threatened with termination, there is breakthrough--_teshuvah_--and a new reaffirmation of "life" as it ascends above _gnosis_. _Gnosis_ accepts a serving dimension once more. And so the dialectic continues, each cycle bringing it to a deeper realization of "life" in the corporal dimensions of "world." There is a Hasidic tale that expresses the struggle of the dialectic, and especially the trial of turning (_teshuvah_).

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[22] OMH, 254.

[23] OMH, 127.

[24] OMH, 248-49.

[25] OJ, 36.

[26] OMH, 246.

> One day it came to pass that the king was dethroned and driven into the wilderness. On the throne sat a demon who wore the royal robes and was so like the king in appearance and behavior that no one doubted it was the king himself. But no matter what shape the devil assumes he cannot stop being a devil, and the subjects found it harder and harder and more and more painful to witness the doings of their king. At last they rebelled and refused to obey him at all. But it did not occur to any of them that a person who did such things could not possibly be the king, and that they should set out and search for the true king who, during all this time, was in the wilderness and had nowhere to lay his head.[27]

This tale not only illustrates the theory of alternation as applied to the _devotio-gnosis_ dialectic, but emphatically communicates the intense confusion and state of crisis which man experiences just before the "turning." In each cycle, the It of _gnosis_ increases its stranglehold on man's humanity, giving him only two alternatives: total dehumanization or a "breakthrough" into entirely new dimensions of religiosity. The crisis of our present age gives every appearance of this near absolute polarization: _devotio_ is totally subservient; the two worlds are unbridgable.

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[27] _IW_, 44.

The Religion of "It"

Dualism, a permanent separation of sacred and profane, religious and world, seems to characterize our times. It appears that the two poles of the dialectic have resolved themselves into an established parallel arrangement, each with its own sphere of operation--"render to Caesar" arrangement.

Buber, however, discloses the fallacy of this arrangement. Beneath the semblance of compromise into equal spheres, he uncovers the presence of a world of It, extended as far as non-totalization will allow.

> We shall accomplish nothing at all if we divide our world and our life into two domains: one in which God's command is paramount, the other governed exclusively by the laws of economics, politics, and the "simple self-assertion" of the group. . . . Stopping one's ears so as not to hear the voice from above is breaking the connection between existence and the meaning of existence. But he who hears the voice and sets a limit to the area beyond which its rule shall not extend is not merely moving away from God, like the person who refuses to listen; he is standing up directly against Him.[28]

The secular world seems to grow as it gains ground from the sphere of religion. But as it is gradually cut off from the "life" of the Thou and left totally to an order of function (the world of It), survival becomes impossible.[29]

> I know nothing of a "world" and a "life in the world" that might separate a man from God. What is thus described is actually life with an alienated world of It, which experiences and uses. He who truly goes out to meet the world goes out also to meet God.[30]

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[28] IW, 235. [29] EG, 139. [30] IT, 95.

Opposite the secular stands the religious. Religion would seem to be the land of the I-Thou. But not so, for as soon as religion ceases to be the reality--the reality of the whole existence of man in and through the world--it ceases to be true religion and becomes its caricature.[31] This separation between "life in God" and "life in the world" is, according to the Hasidic message, the prime evil of all religions.[32]

> I even think that nothing in the world is as apt to mask the face of God as religion is, if it means religion instead of God. What the Bible says is not religious, but holy. To be holy means simply to let everything in social, economic, political life--not only private life--all life, be subjected to the kingship, the kingly rule of God.[33]

This area which pretends to be the land of Thou is even more committed to the land of It than the secular. Its cultic rituals, dogmas, and laws leave almost no room for the unpremeditated response of an I to the discontinuous Thou.

> The men of the Bible are sinners like ourselves, but there is one sin they do not commit, our arch-sin: they do not dare confine God to a circumscribed space or division of life, to "religion." They have not the insolence to draw boundaries around God's commandments and say to Him: "Up to the point, You are sovereign, but beyond these bounds begins the sovereignty of science or society or the state.[34]

More and more the world is set beyond sacramental transformation; the disjunction of "sacred" and "world" increases and the few attempts to bind the two are rigid and formal. The world of It grows to suffocating proportions.

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[31] ABH, 111. [32] OMH, 98.

[33] "Martin Buber on Good and Evil," Saturday Review of Literature, 45 (April 7, '62), 18.

[34] IW, 246.

It is "religion," which usurps the meeting of God, terminates response and redemption, and dresses itself in the guise of the holy . . . it is this force in the world today to which Buber addresses his most eloquent, damning words.

In the area of doctrine, he views the dogma of religion as futile and fallacious. Revelation is the unforeseeable meeting of God in the everyday, the unfathomable meeting of an I and the Eternal Thou. There is real value in setting down and communicating something of this in the gnosis of teaching. But when the serving quality of teaching as mere commentary on life is replaced by the once-and-for-all of a dogma which resists the unforeseeable moment and puts God into a system, then dogma "becomes the most exalted form of invulnerability against revelation."[35] "Revelation does not pour itself into the world through him who receives it as through a funnel."[36]

As for "religion's" morality, Buber denounces any attitude that seeks to overcome the world and all that partakes of it. Especially interesting is his return to the evil urges, here called elemental urges: hunger, sex, the will to power, etc. Although they are essential to man, and to be redeemed and unified in the whole person, "religion" would have us cast them off or subjugate them as threatening forces against the "spiritual," fragmenting man within himself.

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[35] BMM, 18.

[36] IT, 117.

> Even when Christianity includes natural life in sacredness, as in the sacrament of marriage, the bodily life is not hallowed, but merely made subservient to holiness.[37]

The "cultic sacramental" of religion is also rejected by Buber because that which was intended to celebrate and consecrate the everyday, now amputates it. Our sacramental forms have become divorced from everyday life. Not only is the real partner of the communion (God) no longer present, but also the faithful are given a sense of magic, guaranteed effect and a feeling of security without personal participation.[38] "Woe to the man so possessed that he thinks he possesses God."[39]

Buber recognizes that a centralized and codified "religion" will destroy the essential community with its spontaneous inner "life-force" which is the core of true religion.[40]

In conclusion, Buber insists that either religion will be the reality of man's total existence, or it will be a phantom of the covetous human soul, "and then it would be right, promptly and completely, to replace its rituals by art, its commands by ethics, its revelations by science."[41]

> Oh you safe and secure ones, you who take refuge behind the bulwark of the law in order to avoid looking into God's abyss! Yes, you have solid, well-trodden ground under your feet, whereas we hang suspended over the infinite deep, looking about us. Oh, you heirs and heirs who have but to exchange the ancient golden coins into crisp new bills, while we, lonely beggars, sit at the street corner and wait for the coming of the One who will help us. Yet we would not exchange our giddy insecurity and our untrammeled poverty for your confidence and your riches.

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[37] IW, 178. [38] OMH, 94. [39] IT, 106.

[40] PF, 70. [41] ABH, 111.

> For to you God is the One who created once, and then no more; but to us He is the One of whom people profess that He "renews the work of creation each day." And He truly does renew it, within us and through us, desiring to enter by our means into a new reality. Just as He restricted and contracted Himself for the sake of the creation of the world, so does He restrict and contract Himself within us for the sake of the work of mankind. To you God is Being who revealed Himself once and never again. But to us He speaks out of the burning bush of the present, and out of the Urim and Tummin of our innermost hearts.[42]

The Eclipse of God

Where has all of this taken us? What has it done to us? What shall we expect next? Buber is, according to Ernst Biser,[43] the diagnostician of our time. And his diagnosis is the single word, Gottesfinsternis, an eclipse of God. The term is first used in the 1949 For the Sake of Heaven:

> "True enough," said Bunam. "But doesn't it seem strange to you that there are times during which it really looks as though God would let us sink deeper and deeper into the dirt and didn't dream of pulling us out?"
>
> "The periods of great trial," the Yehudi replied, "are those of the eclipse of God. It is as though the sun were to grow dark; if one did not know that it is there, one would believe there was no sun any longer. Thus it is in such periods. Something interposes between us and God's countenance so that it seems as though the world must grow cold, lacking that light. But the truth is that precisely in such a time the great return and repentance which God expects of us becomes possible, in order that the redemption, which He desires of us, be a true self-redemption."
>
> "We have no awareness of Him; it is dark and cold as though He were not; it seems senseless to turn to Him who, if He is here, will not trouble Himself about us; it seems hopeless to will to penetrate to Him who may perhaps be the soul of the universe but not our Father."

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[42] OJ, 137.

[43] "Martin Buber," Philosophy Today, 7 (1963), 103.

> "The unimaginable must take place in us to enable us to start on the return to Him. But when the unimaginable does happen, the great return to God which He awaits is at hand. Despair shatters the prison which emprisons our latent energies. The sources of the primordial depths begin to flow."
>
> They sat in silence. It grew later; the stars gave forth their light and the linden tree its mellow fragrance.[44]

Our God has been the God of "religion," the God of the philosophers. Actually it is only our feeble image of Him--a human manufacture of the Imageless. This image was, in the beginning, born of the devotio--man's encounter with the Eternal Thou.[45]

But man faced a dilemma. If he allowed his image of God to remain somewhat anthropomorphic, what he gained in nearness and presence he lost in truth and preciseness. But if he sought to purify his image, all concrete warmth was lost in abstraction.

As he continued to abstract his image, modern man found that he could "no longer endure a God who is not confined to man's subjectivity, who is merely a 'supreme value.'"[46]

The image became, for these and other reasons, less and less believable, until now--total eclipse.

> In our age the I-It relation, gigantically swollen, has usurped, practically uncontested, the mastery and the rule. The I of this relation, an I that possesses all, makes all, succeeds with all, this I that is unable to say Thou, unable to meet a being essentially, is the lord of the hour. This selfhood that has become omnipotent, with all the It around it, can naturally acknowledge neither God nor any genuine absolute which manifests itself to men as of non-human origin. It steps in between and shuts off from us the light of heaven.[47]

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[44] FSH, 116.

[45] EG, 14.

[46] EG, 21.

[47] EG, 129.

The being that is man meets God in the unconditional meeting of the everyday. But the ordinary contacts of man in today's world are so penetrated and conditioned by mis-meeting, non-conversation, images and masks, and all the other manifestations of the world of It, that meeting becomes impossible. Not only is world estranged, religion closed, and man dehumanized, but God is eclipsed.

This is not to say that God Himself is changed or affected in any way; like the sun, he continues to "shine," to address us always as the Eternal Thou. But man is conditioned and shut off by the overwhelming condition of It. "It," like a black cloud, comes between God and man.

Even in the face of this condition, Buber remains hopeful and advises patience.

> Such is the nature of this hour. A new stream whose source is still hidden speaks against fate and irresponsibility and despair. The I-Thou can come to life with so much greater force than it ever had before.[48]

"Something," he says, "is taking place in the depths that as yet has no name."[49] It is clear that we are involved in a "turning" and a devotio relationship between world and God will emerge. Gnosis will once more retreat to its redemptive role of helping and serving. "Even tomorrow that which has stepped in between may give way."[50]

> No way can be pointed to in this desert night. One's purpose must be to help men of today to stand

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[48] Ibid. [49] Ibid. [50] Ibid.

> fast, with their soul in readiness, until the dawn breaks and a path becomes visible where none suspected it.[51]

Believing Humanism

If it is true that today the predominant type of man is one who prefers to observe and use those whom he meets on his way, Buber also sensed "precisely in the present" a new generation moving towards a genuine believing humanism.

> In the growing, the still plastic generation, more and more men are aware of what is preparing itself there; their day by day increasing awareness, the knowledge of the crisis, summons in them the only counterforce that can succeed in elevating ends again, great clear ends, above the religious means. It is this counterforce that I call the new believing humanism.[52]

Hasidism sees man as pivotal. As the fall into evil culminated in man, so it is man who begins the redemption and leads the world back to unification. Even in the face of this crisis, the world will fulfill its destiny in man and through man's becoming.[53] This central role of man in the unfolding of the world means for Buber a new humanism. Erasmus proposed a humanism in the context of faith, but for him humanity was in one sphere and faith in another. They were parallel but separate. Buber sees the two penetrating each other, working together, each serving as foundation for the other.[54]

Belief is faith, trust, for Martin Buber. His faith is not that of pistis--I believe that doctrine is true; but emunah--I trust this person. It is an unconditional trust in the relationship with God and with world. It is the essential quality of I-Thou.[55]

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[51] FSH, xiii.

[52] ABH, 121.

[53] HMM, 42.

[54] ABH, 117.

A believing humanism interrelates faith and man. It is not a humanism in which man reflects into himself to discover the image of God within and thus come to be his true self, but a humanism in which man goes out into relationship with others, ontologically "realizing" them and himself in the process.[56]

> Meeting with God does not come to man in order that he may concern himself with God, but in order that he may confirm that there is meaning in the world.[57]

The true hallowing of a man is the hallowing of the human in him. The Hasidim read in the Bible: "Holy men shall you be unto me," and they respond with this interpretation: "Humanly holy shall you be unto me."[58]

> At each place, in each hour, in each act, in each speech the holy can blossom forth.[59]

> There is Divine meaning in the life of the world, of man, of human persons, of you, and of me.[60]

Since man is the only creature who has the capacity to respond, "meeting" and unification of the world is possible only through him. But this will occur only if he can relinquish security and safety and venture to trust the world. This is the believing humanism observed and communicated to us by Martin Buber. "Man cannot approach the Divine by reaching beyond the human; he can approach Him through becoming human."[61] This is the core of

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[55] ABH, 21-22.

[56] ABH, 117.

[57] IT, 115.

[58] HMM, 31.

[59] Ibid.

[60] IT, 82.

[61] HMM, 42-43.

Hasidic teaching: to become human is what he, the individual man, has been created for.

> The hasidic teaching is the consummation of Judaism. And this is its message to all: You yourself must begin. Existence will remain meaningless for you if you yourself do not penetrate into it with active love and if you do not in this way discover its meaning for yourself.
>
> Everything is waiting to be hallowed by you; it is waiting to be disclosed in its meaning and to be realized in it by you. For the sake of this, your beginning, God created the world. He has drawn it out of Himself so that you may bring it closer to Him. Meet the world with the fulness of your being and you shall meet Him. That He Himself accepts from your hands what you have to give to the world is His mercy. If you wish to learn to believe, love!
>
> He who loves brings God and the world together.[62]

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[62] OJ, 212-13.

CHAPTER X

RECAPITULATION

State of the Question

What is the concept of "world" which Buber presents us in his dialogue with Hasidism? That question, which initiated this dissertation, was suggested and researched in response to a critical problem of contemporary Catholic theology.

Contemporary man, preoccupied by the secular, has found the themes of change, relative values, and technological ability to reshape the world, a suitable frame of reference in which to interpret his experiences. The older themes of natural-supernatural dualism, found in the conventional theology manuals, have become foreign to him.

Catholic theology seemingly faces a dilemma. To retain the conventional themes risks the Scylla of irrelevancy; to adopt the contemporary themes hazards the Charybdis of secularism. How does one hold in the same hand both spheres of the sacred and the secular--at one and the same time? Grasping one makes probable the loss of the other.

The problem is by no means exclusively Catholic; Protestant and Jewish religious thinkers are faced with the same dilemma. This study has focused its attention upon a Jewish response and the wisdom it engendered to see if it might offer some light to the Catholic theologians.

Martin Buber, the Jewish religious thinker selected for this study, comes recommended as one who has come to grips with this problem in his own life. On this issue specifically, he has considerably influenced both the Judaic and Christian world.

Buber's thought locates itself in three parallel contexts: the philosophical, the biblical, and the Hasidic. The Hasidic context, with its inclusion of ritual, doctrine, and community religious patterns, is the most congenial to the theologian.

Hasidism: Not an Exclusive Teaching

Hasidism does not advance a new or unique teaching of world but rather manifests to the world-at-large a meaning of existence which is latently present everywhere and evidenced by all great religious traditions. Its teaching is not in the category of doctrine, but in the category of life. A creative "life-force" lies hidden but active at the root of our world. Hasidism momentarily sacramentalized this power; she embodied it and made it visible through her religious vitality. The Hasidic manifestation has since declined but the life-force, even though once more hidden, continues in its creative processes.

The Primal Reality of the World

The first reality of the world is relationship. The most immediate, obvious relationship bridges man and his fellowman. Next is a "threshold" relationship between man and the animate and inanimate world; and finally, a kind of relationship within man--between man as subject and his yet uncoordinated emotions, called evil urges. The term which is given to the totality of these relationships is "world."

But underlying all of these is a primal relationship between man and God. In and through the reality of world, God addresses man and man responds to God. "He who meets the world, meets God." Nor is there any other meeting ground between God and man. Hasidism affirms the world in this highest sense.

"Life" is the Hasidic term developed by Buber to denote this primal relationship. To reflect upon it gives one the meaning of existence. But the realm of "life" is prior to and beyond the realm of thought. Conceptual knowing is a faint and fragile mirror of the "knowing" of life-experience.

The World: Dynamic Process

This world, so existentially affirmed by the Hasid, is not a set reality he looks out upon. It is a moving, becoming process--a process of realization occurring, not simply before his eyes, but through his active participation. The world is a linear, dynamic process embracing all time and moving toward ultimate fulfillment. "Life" is the primal dynamic of this linear process.

"Life" is creative. To the Hasid, creation is biblical rather than philosophical--a movement from a chaotic potentiality to a unified actuality. In reality, "life" is prior to and creative of person and world. Through his involvement in this dynamic force, the individual becomes a person; the world's chaotic potencies become actual. Creation, then, is not a once-and-for-all event located at the beginning of time, but a continuum that spans the world to its very end. And each moment in that continuum is a unique creation in itself.

"Life" is redemptive. Another facet of this same continuum sees the chaotic world suffering from internal alienation and confusion. Through "life," this not-yet-hallowed world moves toward realization of its potentiality; it is made whole, hallowed. The redemptive dynamic is the process of all history--realized in a unique way in each moment. "A drop of messianic consummation must be mingled with each hour" (OJ, 209).

The Dialectic Process of Alternation

The Hasid further interprets his world as a polarity of human experience. All life is strung out between the two poles of security and freedom, evil and good, structure and life, power and love, etc.

At one extremity is the established order, the forms in which the world has been momentarily structured. In religion, this pole, called gnosis, refers to the myth, ritual, doctrine, and community patterns that objectify religious "life."

At the opposite extremity is the direct, unconditional meeting of reality. In religion, this pole, devotio, refers to the whole person in unqualified openness to God's dialogical presence in and through the world.

To Western man, these polarities appear to be antithetical; but to the Hasid, their contradictory character is only apparent, not inherent. They are paradoxical but become resolved into a hidden, radical unity through the all-embracing dialectic of human life.

True life cannot select one pole to the exclusion of the other. There can be no sustained community without structure, no living faith without doctrine, no religious life without sacramental symbols. Just as love engenders an embrace, and that embrace in turn confirms and intensifies love, so _devotio_ is embodied in _gnosis_, and is there confirmed and rebounded into new and more intense realization of the Presence.

Maurice Friedman terms the dialectic "alternation," for there is always a question of balance between the two poles, and a subsequent alternating struggle for ascendency. Alternation safeguards the dialectic and avoids total polarization. _Devotio_ could not long survive without the strength and stability of _gnosis_. _Gnosis_ would immediately suffocate man in a world of _It_ if it were to lose the "life" of _devotio_.

True world-affirming religion thrives only when _devotio_ is superior. But while _devotio_ is the more powerful and more creative force, it also threatens and destroys man's security. "Man finds it more comfortable to have to do with [_gnosis_] than to have to do with God" (_ABH_, 110). He gradually elevates _gnosis_ until it dominates "life," even to the point of suffocating it. In fact, _gnosis_ would eventually totalize its dominion, were it not for the unrelenting address of the Eternal Thou.

In his embrace of these paradoxical extremes, the Hasid preserves the resulting tension as creative, rather than shunning it as evil. His essential teaching is devekuth: cleaving to God in all things. Man meets God by walking the narrow ridge, embracing both polarities, accepting the tension, and realizing God's redemptive presence in that tension. The Hasid affirms his world by assuming full responsibility and participation in this dialectic process. He understands and lives all aspects of his religious life in this interpretation of "world."

God: Transcendent and Immanent

God is the ultimate reality over all. When considered as a being in Himself, transcendent and incomprehensible to man, He is called the En-Sof. But in a mystery that cannot be explained, He has withheld some of this incomprehensibility and initiated a creative relationship with man, addressing him in the context of man's other relationships in the world. God, when considered as personally immanent to man, is called the Shekinah. Pictured by the Hasid as the Bride of the En-Sof, the Shekinah is said to have become willfully exiled in the world, separated from Her Spouse.

To the extent that man has not yet opened himself in full response to the Shekinah's loving address, he is not personally present to Her, nor She to him. Until this full, open, creative meeting occurs, man and world will remain not-yet-hallowed and the Shekinah will remain exiled, separated from the En-Sof. But when the total meeting is accomplished, God, in his ontological relationship with man, will realize a unification of his transcendence with his immanence. Of Himself, God is not becoming; God is. But a becoming aspect does exist in man's relationship with Him. Through man's dialectic affirmation of the world, the Bride will be restored to her Spouse and the Godhead will be unified.

The Question of Evil

Faithful to his dialectic principle, Buber denies that there is a profane world absolutely opposed to the sacred. The profane is only the not-yet-hallowed, potentially one with the sacred, and waiting only to be hallowed through "life."

Similarly, Buber denies that there is an absolute evil in permanent opposition to God. However, although evil resides fundamentally within men's hearts, its effects extend out into the world about us; Evil is real, not psychological. It is the unredeemed condition of the present world--unredeemed, yet called to be redeemed through the affirming dialectic process. Evil is the throne of the Good.

There are two types of evil described by Buber, decisionlessness, and relationlessness. The former describes the evil urges within man (his undirected emotions) which are imprisoned, as it were, in the dark shells of "mismeeting" or "thingness," and dash about chaotically, wastefully and dangerously, waiting for a liberating direction into real meeting.

The latter describes the more willful, determined nature of evil in man. Since he is already addressed by the Eternal Thou, the response depends upon him. If he, the community or the world is in exile from God and self, it is because he has yet failed to turn and respond. Should a man determine not to open himself and not to respond to God (world), he withdraws into relationlessness.

However, given the unceasing presence of the Eternal Thou, a universal state of relationlessness--Absolute Evil--is impossible.

The Hallowing Process

Hallowing is the affirming event in which man opens the profane to divine transcendence. God dwells where man lets Him in. The world was created for man's sake and it is allowed to stand in its present unhallowed state so that man can bring God and world together. He fulfills his service (avoda) by creative meeting. Man is the cosmic mediator who awakens a holy reality in things through a holy contact with them.

The task begins here and now, in this concrete situation in which man stands at this moment. One meets God everywhere and at all times, but he emphatically meets Him here where he stands now. Each man redeems through his own unique personality, not by acquiring another's. Hasidism recognizes no hierarchy of persons, deeds or times; this moment, this person, this place is to be redeemed by me.

The Hasid sometimes describes this redemptive meeting as the "raising of the sparks." The evil urge is redeemed not by renouncing, subjugating, or annihilating it, but by embracing it. By an embrace, its deeper, true meaning is affirmed, and its chaotic power is released into a redemptive direction. The embrace is accomplished by man's free decision.

There are many ordinary decisions in a man's life which draw him from the established order back into the dialectic relationship. But some decisions are of ultimate intensity involving an element of crisis. At a critical point, when man slowly, relentlessly approaches total depersonalization, he finds retreat or advance impossible. His only option is a turning (teshuvah) into wholly new paths in an abandoning response to the Eternal Thou. Having turned, his life once again becomes a "way." Turning answers a crisis of "life." It can be a crisis of one man, or a crisis of the entire world community where all men suffer a time of relationlessness. In this latter situation, turning is a unique saving event that rescues mankind from the brink of total dehumanization.

To meet the world in this hallowing fashion is described in Hasidic terms as devotio. Parallel to the attitude of I-Thou, it is wholly open, uncalculated and uncontrolled, without technique or system of manipulation, but with intensity of the whole person and with respect for the mystery before which it stands. "We can prepare ourselves for this [meeting], but we cannot prepare the [meeting] itself" (OMH, 181).

Man in Community

Community is essential. If no shorter line exists between God and man than that which embraces the world, and if the world is specified in this particular community in which an individual finds himself, then no individual who stands above or separate from the rest of the community can ever hope to meet God, hallow the world, or realize his own personality. Like two arcs that form a perfect circle, each man depends upon the community about him. The hallowing of the world depends totally upon this interdependency and upon man's reciprocal action within a specific community. The fundamental fact is man with man. The Hasid's central concern was never to "save his soul," but to rescue the Shekinah from exile and to redeem the world--specifically his Hasidic community.

The Hasid realized his own personality in his dynamic relationship with the community. Buber describes this creative growth process through two figures. The first, the simple man (am haartz), responds to the community with his whole person in perfect trust. Since he has not yet acquired a clear self-identity, he does not distinguish between himself and the community over against him. His identity is total and childlike in the highest sense.

In time, the man steps back, reflects, and sees himself as an entity separate from the community, and so acquires "distance." He then turns and reenters the communal relationship which now becomes more truly mutual and creative than the first stage. He now becomes the perfect man, unified within himself and redemptive in his meetings with the community. He bares to them, in a lived manner, not a conceptual one, a vision of the meaning of existence--"life." Their religious leader, the Zaddik, exemplified this perfect man. Outside the context of community, this personal growth would be impossible.

Among several Hasidic communal characteristics, three should be noted. First, while most religious communities encourage or even insist upon a specific orthodoxy among their members, Hasidism allowed and even encouraged divergent polarities. Its growth was fostered by the dialectic tension between the spiritualistic, "other-worldly" communities with their "leader" type of Zaddik, and the realistic "world-affirming" communities with their "helper" type of Zaddik. The Hasidim lived the dialectic process.

Secondly, this dialectic totally affirmed the context of this world. It was not a monastic community, isolated and artificially restricted by sex or class; rather, it embraced men and women in the situation of their daily lives and occupations. The Zaddik himself was married, raised a family, earned his livelihood in a secular occupation, and participated in the affairs of public life.

Thirdly, while the Hasidic community had a structural pattern, the structure was always loose and subservient to the communal "life." Hasidism was characterized by a spontaneous response to the immediate care and responsibility of the moment, rather than by planned programs and efficient systems. In fact, when the "system" of Zaddikism rose above the "life," Hasidism declined.

A New Concept of Religion

True religion ("Religiosität") is the reality of the whole existence of man in and through the world. It embraces the totality of his life, is the meaning of his existence, and is the true reality of the world. The sum of Hasidism's world-affirming dialectic is "true religion."

This dialogical relationship called "life," although present everywhere, can be objectified and more fully entered into through religious symbols (gnosis). In Hasidism, "life" became objectified in the community and its leaders (Baal Shem Tov, Zaddikim), in its legends (dialogical myth which evolved out of community experiences), doctrine (man-abstracted conceptualizations), and sacramental ritual (the meal and dance). These symbols are not "life" itself but embody and manifest "life," so that the individual can meet and relate with God more easily and intensely in religious celebrations than in other, non-symbolic situations.

But these religious symbols are easily corrupted by standardizing them into objects for their own sake, or even by attributing to them a magic power of their own. In effect, this separates religion and world, the sacred and the profane. "The separation of 'life in God' and 'life in the world' is the primal evil of all religion" (OMH, 99). To establish the religious symbol as a thing for its own sake terminates the dialogue between God and community and suffocates "life." When religion becomes one category among several, it ceases to be religion and becomes its caricature. With this development the profane world suffers as well, for without its essential meaning, namely, the bearer and respondent of "life," it becomes the alienated world of It.

Our present world crisis finds its source in this gigantically swollen caricature of religion, stepping between man and God (Gottesfinsternis), strangling dialogue, and shutting us off from "life." God is eclipsed, world estranged, man dehumanized, and true religion suffocated. Only a powerful "turning" can ever restore "life." Buber not only diagnoses this radical separation of sacred and profane as the basic sickness of our world, but further prescribes the remedy of Hasidism: dialectic affirmation. The hope of the world lies in man because he alone can bring the turning.

Unification

Unification (Yihud), the fulfillment of the dialectic affirmation, stands as the central motif and motivating force of Hasidism. In the fulfillment, the dialectic polarity will resolve itself into its radical unity. Man's orientations and established orders will achieve such fidelity to the unconditional Reality that they will become one with that reality.

God-in-Himself (En-Sof) will be unified with God-encountered-by-man (Shekinah). The creation process will conclude with a world, not discarded as of no further use nor "spiritualized" into a new order, but fulfilled in its own dimension. Redemption will remove from the world, all separation and alienation, and will fulfill man as the perfect human, an integrated personality within, capable of sustained I-Thou relationships with God and world without.

Conclusion

This study has listened intently to a community of eighteenth-century, middle European Jews--a poor and ignorant people, provincial and superstitious. And it has observed these people inspire Martin Buber with a vision of "world" so lofty that it stands as teacher and wisdom to educated, urbane, and technologically sophisticated twentieth-century Western man. The paradox is unbelievable, unless perhaps the claim of Hasidism is true: here is wisdom that flows across all centuries, peoples and continents. The vision of the Hasid touches the wisdom of the world.

Specific applications of the Hasidic vision to Catholic theology go beyond the scope of this dissertation but their possibilities are numerous and intriguing. The dialectic between life-experience and formulation provides an interesting model for a theory of development of doctrine. The symbolic-sacrament, embodying the redeeming dialogue, should offer interesting suggestions to the corresponding area of sacramental theology. The parallel concept of myth and legend as sacramental bearer of the Presence might also offer insights and even reevaluations to catechetical and liturgical theology. Hasidism's positive view of the world and its particular distaste for mortification should attract the attention of the ascetic theologian. The mystical theologian should be equally interested in Hasidism's locating the experiential knowing of God in the everyday more than in the quiet of prayer.

But Hasidism's greatest application would be to the general tenor of Catholic theology. The theologian is urged to risk a search for the holy at the roots of the profane. He is encouraged, not only to bear patiently, but to embrace creatively, the tension he feels walking between safe supernaturalism and perilous secularism. He is given a feeling for man and world, yet in an aura of transcendence and with a hope for a future already being realized. It is here, in this world, that God reveals himself, nowhere else.

> The world is a creation, not a reflection, not semblance, not play. The world is not something which must be overcome. It is created reality, but reality created to be hallowed. Everything created has a need to be hallowed and is capable of receiving it: all created corporeality, all created urges and elemental forces of the body. Hallowing enables the body to fulfil the meaning for which it was created. The meaning with which Creation informed man, informed the world, is fulfilled through the hallowing. Here then, the world is neither transfigured into something wholly spiritual nor overcome by the spirit. The spirit does not embrace a holy world, rejoicing in its holiness, nor does it float above an unholy world, clutching all holiness to itself: it produces holiness, and the world is made holy (IW, 180-81).

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX I

CHRONOLOGY OF MARTIN BUBER

Childhood Influences

year	age	
1878		Born on February 8th in Vienna, Austria.
1881	3	Parents separate. Buber is sent to live with his grandparents in Lemberg, Galicia.
1886	9	Spends summers with his father. Visits Hasidic Communities of Sadagora and Czortkov. Attends Polish grammar school.
1892	13	Returns to home of father (remarried). Ceases to observe the strict rabbinical laws following Bar Mitzvah.
1893	15	Describes self-condition as close to suicide. Resettled through reading of Kant.

Secular Education on "Conversion"

1896	18	Begins studies in school of philosophy at University of Vienna.
1897	19	Continues studies at Leipzig. Attends first Zionist Congress.
1898	20	Summer session at University of Berlin, then returns to Leipzig.
1899	21	Summer sessions at Zürich and Basle, then returns for fall session at Berlin. Defends doctoral thesis on Christian Mystics.
1901	23	Joins staff of Der Welt, Zionist publication. Helps form Jüdischer Verlag.

1904	26	Attempts to initiate periodical *Der Jude* with Chaim Weizmann. Fails. Retires from all activity for five-year study of Hasidism.
1906	28	*The Tales of Rabbi Nachman*
1907	29	*The Legend of the Baal-Shem*
1908	30	*The Life of the Hasidim*
1909	31	Returns to active life.

Years of Mature Thought

1913	35	*Daniel: Dialogues on Realization*
1916	38	Successfully begins publication of *Der Jude*. Emphasis on "Cultural Zionism."
1918	40	*My Way to Hasidism*
1920	42	Meets Franz Rosenzweig. Begins fruitful association.
1923	45	*I and Thou*. Assumes chair of Jewish Philosophy of Religion at University of Frankfurt-am-Main.
1925	47	Begins, with Rosenzweig, translation of Hebrew Bible into German.
1926	48	Begins periodical *Die Kreatur* with Josef Wittig and Victor von Weizsaecker.
1927	49	*The Baal-Shem-Tov's Instruction*
1929	51	Death of Franz Rosenzweig.
1933	55	Deposed from chair at University of Frankfurt by Nazi Party. Assumes direction of "Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus" in Frankfurt-am-Main.
1935	57	Delivers "The Power and the Spirit" speech at Berlin Philharmonic before 200 S.S. men.
1938	60	Completely silenced. Leaves for Palestine.

Work in Israel

1938	60	Assumes Chair of Social Philosophy at Hebrew University in Jerusalem.
1948	70	*The Way of Man According to the Teaching of Hasidism*

1949	71	Heads the Institute of Adult Education in Israel. Tales of Hasidism. Nominated for Nobel Prize.
1951	73	Visits United States on lecture tour.
1952	74	Receives Goethe Prize at the University of Hamburg.
1953	75	Accepts controversial Peace Prize from the German Book Trade at Frankfurt-am-Main.
1958	80	Wife, Paula, dies.
1961	83	Death of Dag Hammarskjold, friend and translator of Buber.
1962	84	Protest to Premier Ben Gurion against unjust treatment of Israeli Arabs. Letter of appeal for Adolf Eichmann.
1963	85	Receives Erasmus Award. Letter of protest to Premier Khrushchev against bitter treatment of Jews in Russia.
1965	87	Awarded"Freedom of Jerusalem" medal. Dies, June 13th, in Jerusalem.

APPENDIX II

APPENDIX II

OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF HASIDISM

1500-1650	Migration of Ashkenazic Jewry to Poland
1648	Chmielnicki leads Ukrainian Cossacks in "holy war" against Poland and Jews. Ten years of persecution
1654	Russians join Ukrainians
1655	Sweden invades Poland
1666	Sabbatai Zevi, Pseudo-Messiah apostasizes
1700?	Birth of Israel ben Eliezer
1735?	Israel ben Eliezer begins career as Baal Shem
1740-1781	Period of Origin and First Struggles of Hasidism*
1745?	Baal Shem Tov centers Hasidic movement at Mieczyboz
1750?	Jacob Frank converts to the Roman Catholic Church
1760	Death of Baal Shem Tov
1772	Death of Dov Baer First Excommunication by Vilna Gaon and Mittnaggedim
1781-1815	Period of Growth and Expansion of Hasidism*
1781	Second conflict with Mittnaggedim
1797	Death of Gaon of Vilna
1801	Religious freedom granted Hasidim by Alexander I
1815-1870	Period of Zaddikism: Struggle against Haskalah*
1919	First written attack on Hasidism by Haskalah
1870-1930+	Period of decline of Hasidism to present*

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*S. Dubnow, Geschichte des Chassidismus, 1.69-70.

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[1] "Those of my writings that (for various reasons) seem worthy of being preserved . . ." (M. Buber, "Author's Foreword," *ABH*, 27). As yet a complete listing of Buber's works does not exist. Cf. M. Friedman, *Martin Buber, Life of Dialogue*, 283-300; and M. Friedman, *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*, 747-86. See also R. Smith, *Martin Buber*, 9.

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[2] Buber's basic form of writing is the essay (or address). These have been edited and collected in different combinations in German. They have been re-edited on the occasion of a series of translations in England, and again in America. The above listing includes both original and translated forms, allowing for much overlapping of essays published in the different collections.

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